YEZIDISM—ITS BACKGROUND, OBSERVANCES AND TEXTUAL TRADITION

Philip G. Kreyenbroek

Texts and Studies in Religion
Volume 62

The Edwin Mellen Press
Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kreyenbroek, Philip G., 1948-
Yezidism--its background, observances and textual tradition / by Philip G. Kreyenbroek.
p. cm. -- (Texts and studies in religion ; v. 62)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-7734-9004-3
1. Yezidis. I. Title. II. Series: Texts and studies in religion ; 62.
BL1595.K74 1995
299'.159--dc20 94-23547
CIP

This is volume 62 in the continuing series
Texts and Studies in Religion
Volume 62 ISBN 0-7734-9004-3
TSR Series ISBN 0-88946-976-8

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

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The Edwin Mellen Press
Box 450
Lewiston, New York
USA 14092-0450

The Edwin Mellen Press
Box 67
Queenston, Ontario
CANADA L0S 1L0

The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd.
Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales
UNITED KINGDOM SA48 7DY

Printed in the United States of America

dedicated to

Mieke F. J. Kreyenbroek

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FOREWORD

The Yezidis are a small religious group. Estimates of their numbers in Iraq vary between 100,000 and 250,000; there are perhaps 40,000 or more in Armenia and Georgia, and 5,000 in Syria. A majority of the 10,000 Yezidis who once lived in Turkey found refuge in Germany during the 1980s, as life in their homeland had become unbearable. In spite of their small numbers, the Yezidis and their faith have fascinated many Western travellers and scholars since the middle of the last century, and they have been the subject of a large number of publications. This intensive academic interest has, however, so far failed to produce a satisfactory account of the Yezidi faith. Scholars are now agreed, on the whole, on the main points of the history of the Yezidi community and there is a corpus of known facts concerning its beliefs and practices. However, in the course of the history of the study of Yezidism, scholars' definitions of the true nature of the faith have become progressively more arid and remote from contemporary realities, which eventually led to a marked decline in academic interest.

One of the reasons for this impasse is probably to be sought in the fact that, until recently, the only known texts of a religious nature whose authenticity was generally accepted were a few Arabic poems ascribed to Sheykh Adi which contained practically no information about the faith as such. Two highly informative texts, the 'Sacred Books', came to light around the turn of the century. These, however, failed to meet the criteria normally adopted to judge the authenticity of written traditions, and were therefore regarded as suspect. Yezidism was thus believed to lack a substantial textual tradition, and to possess at most a number of distinctive observances. The ideas and methods of most researchers, moreover,

derived from the study of written religious traditions. This meant that it was assumed that the Yezidi tradition, like those of other religions of the Middle East, was based on an articulate, monolithic body of authoritative teachings. The views of contemporary Yezidis, which did not appear to reflect such a tradition, were therefore regarded as proof of the corrupt state of the contemporary religion.

It was understandable, in view of this apparent lack of reliable data derived from modern Yezidism itself, that students should have shown great interest in the origins of the sect. What was perhaps unfortunate was that, almost from the beginning, such interests came to predominate. Early publications suggest that theories about the roots of Yezidism, however vague, were felt to be at least as valuable as hard-won and meticulous descriptions of its realities. The same tendency can be seen in the debates of the 1930s. Modern Yezidism, therefore, was widely thought of as the debased form of an older and more impressive cult which scholars—consciously or unconsciously—set out to reconstruct. Theories about roots, in short, were not used to elucidate modern Yezidism; that faith was studied largely in order to shed light on its hypothetical forerunners. The question of origins came to be perceived as being so central that the work of one scholar, M. Guidi, who laid emphasis on the Islamic roots of the sect, led to a general view of Yezidism as an aberrant form of Islam. Since it was also realised that the modern cult has relatively little in common with that religion, a deadlock seemed to have been reached.

Earlier researchers had examined a wide range of religions and sects which could have given rise to Yezidism, and some stressed the possibility of Iranian roots. Several later scholars—including Guidi himself—also thought that the non-Islamic substratum of beliefs which can be detected in the cult was of Iranian or "Kurdish" origin. It is ironic, therefore, that the links between Yezidism and the religions of ancient Iran do not appear ever to have been seriously investigated. Plainly, few Islamists would have had the training or the inclination to do so, while Iranists seemed to have little reason to turn their attention to a cult of 'devil-worshippers' of allegedly Islamic origin which, moreover, was not based on a body of authoritative texts. Things might of course have been different had it been recognised that the contents of the 'Sacred Books' could be valid even if these were not based on a lengthy written tradition. The failure to realise this is one instance among many of the disregard of the value of the oral tradition of Yezidism. This tendency—regarding the non-literate character of the Yezidi faith as a sign of the

corrupt state of the modern cult, rather than one of the chief characteristics of that religion—was arguably one of the factors which contributed to the decline of academic interest in Yezidism.

One of the aims of the present book is to revive this interest. First of all, it intends to draw attention to the existence of an extensive corpus of Yezidi religious texts, which have always been handed down orally and until recently did not exist in written form. Secondly, it seeks to present Yezidism as an essentially non-literate religion, many of whose characteristic elements derive from its oral character. It will further be argued that several aspects of Yezidism can be better understood in the light of modern insights in the field of ancient Iranian religion, while the striking parallels with a modern sect, the Ahl-e Haqq, are also undoubtedly significant.

The Yezidis have often been described as a secretive people who are not permitted to reveal their religion to outsiders. While many travellers denied any such reticence on the part of their informants, it is true that the Yezidis have succeeded in keeping hidden several elements of their faith, including the character of a large body of religious texts, the *Qewls*, for a long time. The *Qewls* are hymns which are chanted by trained bards (*qewwal*) on occasions of a religious nature. A.H. Layard (1849: I. 293, 305), whose pioneering work on the Yezidis was to prove immensely influential, stated that these texts are in Arabic and therefore unintelligible to most Yezidis. Although it is true that they contain a relatively large number of Arabic loan-words, the language of the Hymns is in fact a form of Northern Kurdish. It is possible that some Yezidis may have believed that these holy texts, with their unfamiliar vocabulary, were in a foreign language—some modern Yezidis still believe that they are in Arabic—but the majority of Layard's informants must have known better. The most probable reason for this piece of misinformation, therefore, is a desire to screen these holy texts from the inquisitive attention of aliens. If such was indeed their aim, they succeeded remarkably well; Layard's assertion was regularly repeated in later publications. Even the Kurdologist Roger Lescot, who knew of the existence of the *Qewls* and presumably discussed them with local informants, failed to realise their importance for the study of Yezidism. The world of scholarship, in fact, remained ignorant of the character and importance of these texts until the Yezidis themselves drew attention to them. In 1978, the brothers O. and J. Jelîl included a number of *Qewls* in their publication *Kurdskij Folklor'*. More or less at the same time, two Yezidi intellectuals from Iraq, Pîr Khidr Silêman and Dr Khelîl Jindî, who were deeply

concerned about the threats facing their community generally and their oral tradition in particular, prevailed upon the spiritual leader of the day to allow them to record and publish a number of these texts. An impressive collection of texts was published in their book *Êzdiyatî* in 1979; this was followed in 1985 by another work by Silêman, *Gundiyatî*, which contains more *Qewls*.

The existence of a hitherto unknown body of textual sources naturally puts the study of Yezidism on a new footing. Its evidence confirms the validity of the information contained in the 'Sacred Books', whose authenticity had earlier been called in question. While this corpus of texts cannot be said to represent an 'official' form of Yezidism—which, it will be argued, does not exist—it does reflect a coherent tradition in the light of which some of the other data can be studied. The unexpected and striking similarities between the legends and imagery found in these texts and those of the Ahl-e Haqq—another cult which probably originated among Western Iranians—indicates that both cults spring from a common, well-defined, non-Islamic tradition. A comparison between these two cults and elements of ancient Iranian religion further suggests that a number at least of the Iranian traits go back to an ancient faith which was probably dominant among speakers of Western Iranian languages before Zoroastrianism became prominent in their areas. Ironically, a more detailed study of the tradition itself thus provides precisely the type of information which earlier scholars were so eager to find. The realisation that elements deriving from an ancient Iranian faith—together with traits of Islamic origin—play a significant role in Yezidism helps us gain a better understanding of the history of the religion, and of some of its practices and preoccupations. For example the belief that the 'elements', water, fire, earth and air, are closely associated with divine beings and therefore deserve respect, has clear counterparts in both Zoroastrianism and the faith of the Ahl-e Haqq.

The insight that the tradition is fundamentally non-literate throws further light on its development. It can be shown, for example, that in composing their 'sacred history' the Yezidis adapted the objective historical facts in such a way that these came to fit a preconceived pattern; this would have been almost impossible in a strongly literate culture. Such characteristic features as the indistinct identity of many Yezidi holy beings, and the frequent disagreements among Yezidis concerning details of the faith, can all be traced back to a tradition where written documents play hardly any role at all. While an understanding of Yezidism as a "scriptural faith without a scripture" diminishes that religion and its members, the

view that its non-literate nature is one of its essential characteristics leads to an appreciation of Yezidism as a complex faith, perfectly adapted to its cultural environment. Further study of Yezidism along these lines may make a significant contribution to our understanding of the development of non-literate religious traditions generally.

The present book does not claim to be in any way a definitive study of Yezidism. It is frankly the work of a male Iranist, whose personal observations are based on limited periods of intensive contact with one Yezidi community, that of Sheykhan in Northern Iraq, and on interviews in Europe with a small number of members of various communities over a longer period of time. To a large extent, the first part of the book consists of a reinterpretation of available material in the light of new insights derived from these contacts and from a study of the *Qewls*. The world of the Yezidi women of Northern Iraq is closed to a male foreigner; this has resulted in a rather glaring lacuna in the book which, it is hoped, will one day be filled by an author of the appropriate sex.

I was privileged to visit the Yezidi community in the Safe Haven of Northern Iraq for some weeks in March and April 1992 and again in September and October of that year. Although these visits proved illuminating in many other respects, their main purpose was to work on the oral texts of the Yezidis. On both occasions Pîr Khidr Silêman and other members of the community gave unstintingly of their time, helping me to translate their sacred texts—which for the most part they had always understood approximately and intuitively—in the precise manner demanded by Western scholarship. This was by no means an easy task. First of all, the *Qewls* are difficult by any standard, using an allusive style and many words and references which are obscure to outsiders and not always intelligible to modern Yezidis. Each informant, moreover, naturally tended to feel certain of his own interpretation, while only a few saw the force of considerations which seemed crucial to a Westerner. The result of this joint labour is published in the second part of this book—admittedly a small sample of the vast corpus of texts but, it is thought, a representative one. Because of the various difficulties involved—not the least of which is caused by the relative poverty of lexicographic data—the meaning of some passages, words and references has remained unclear, while translations which seem to yield good sense may need to be revised as more Yezidi *Qewls*—and more Kurdish dictionaries—are published. Although I must take responsibility for the final edition, translation and commentary of the texts, this part of the work could

not have been written without the indefatigable help of Pîr Khidr Silêman.

The transcription of names and technical terms posed considerable problems. Many prominent Yezidi figures began life as Muslims, with Arabic names, and a large number of technical terms also derive from Arabic. In the course of time, however, the dominant language of the Yezidi tradition came to be Kurmanji Kurdish. The problem is that the usual systems of transcribing Arabic differ fundamentally from the accepted Roman transcription of Kurmanji. Also, experience tends show that the latter, which is based on Turkish orthography, seems particularly impenetrable to readers who are unfamiliar with Kurdish or Turkish. This transcription, moreover, disregards differences between consonants which are distinct in Arabic but are pronounced alike in most dialects of Kurdish. These differences are largely preserved when the Kurmanji of Northern Iraq is written in the Arabic alphabet, and they can help to identify the origin of a word.

Because of all this, it was not possible to adopt a single system of transcription. When Kurdish words or short phrases occur in the English text—but not in longer sentences, or in discussions of linguistic points in the Commentary to the Texts—an adapted version of the standard transcription of Kurmanji is used, with 'sh' for 'ş', 'kh' for 'x', 'j' for 'c', 'ch' for 'ç', and 'zh' for 'j'. This also applies to names except that, in passages where their owners are clearly placed in a Muslim setting these are transcribed as Arabic words, with similar modifications in the transcription. In general discussions, for example, the well-known Sufi is called 'al-Ḥallāj'; where he occurs as a Yezidi saint he is referred to as 'el-Ḥellaj'. For a few very common names and terms, such as 'Sheykh Adi', 'Melek Tawus' and 'Ramadan', simplified forms are used except where names refer to historical figures.

When transcribing Kurdish texts, the standard transcription has been used, except that the Arabic emphatic consonants and *'ayn, ḥ, ġ* are represented as they occur when Kurmanji is written in Arabic script. These consonants have been indicated in the texts where they are found in the original version, but not where the latter uses the 'regular' Kurdish sounds; this leads to apparent—minor—inconsistencies. Most authors minimise the use of double consonants when writing Kurdish, but there appears to be no clear rule in this matter. In the transcription used here double consonants have been indicated in words of Arabic origin where this could help readers to recognise their origin. Kurdish *rr* has generally been transcribed except at the beginning of words. While the dialect of the works of

Silêman and Jindî does differentiate between /î/ and /ê/, the distinctions between these vowels are frequently blurred, especially when they occur *in fine*. Where this could lead to misunderstandings in the texts as published here, the forms have been 'corrected' in the light of the grammar of modern standard Kurmanji. In most Kurdish publications—as in the recitations of the Qewwals—rhyme is given priority over considerations of grammar. Since one of the aims of the present work is to make the texts as accessible as possible to Kurdologists, the resulting anomalous endings have generally been restored to their grammatically correct form, with reference to the original text in the footnotes. For similar reasons the transcription of hymns first published in the work of the Jelîl brothers, which are written in a different orthography and represent a different subdialect, has for the most part been adapted to the system used elsewhere in the book. Dialectal peculiarities which affect the rhyme, or which seemed significant for other reasons, have however been retained.

My thanks are due first of all to Pîr Khidr Silêman for his patient explanations of the meaning and background of the texts, for his kind permission to reproduce the hard-won results of his and Dr Jindî's research in this book, and for all his help in introducing me to the Yezidi community.

I am very grateful to the Spalding Trust for a generous grant which enabled me to visit to Northern Iraq in September and October 1992, and without which this book could not have been written. My thanks are also due to the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, for a generous subvention towards the cost of proofreading the book.

I am indebted to Professor Jelîlê Jelîl, now of Vienna, for his permission to reproduce texts first published by himself in an adapted orthography.

Without the help of Mas'ud Barzani, Siamand Banaa, Safin Dezayee, and staff of KDP Headquarters, Duhok, this research would probably have been impossible. Institutions and individuals affiliated to other Kurdish political organisations, such as the staff of PUK Television, Duhok, also gave invaluable help in many ways. I am very grateful to them all.

I owe a debt of gratitude to many other Kurds, Yezidi and non-Yezidi, some of whose names I never learned. Of the Yezidi community I am particularly indebted to the Baba Chawûsh, Sheykh Eydo Baba Sheykh, the Sheykh el-Wezîr and his two sons, Feqîr Ḥajjî and his son Bedel, Feqîr 'Elî, the singer Chîcho, and to all members of Pîr Khidr Silêman's household. Dr Mamo Othman, now of Berlin,

always responded promptly whenever I asked him for help. Among non-Yezidis, the poet 'Ebd el-Reḥman Mizûrî of Dihok, and the London-based Kurds, Mr Baran Rizgar and Mr Sami Shoresh, have always been ready to place their knowledge of Kurdish vocabulary and idiom at my disposal.

I am very grateful to Ms F. Christine Allison for reading the work in typescript, and for her valuable suggestions. My thanks are also due to Mrs Joyce Hutchinson for editing the typescript with great care and accuracy. Among the many other friends and colleagues who have given me help, information and advice, I would like to thank Professor Joyce Blau, Dr Martin van Bruinessen, Mrs Mary Ann Smothers Bruni, Dr Michael L. Chyet, Ms Nellida Fuccaro, Mr John S. Guest, Professor John R. Hinnells, Mr Ab F. de Jong, Mr Oric P.V. L'vov-Basirov, Mrs Catherine Lawrence, Ms Diana Matias, Mr Bob Mitchell, Mrs Shehnaz Munshi, Ms Maria T. O'Shea, Mrs Sarah Stewart, Mr Christoff Unger, Dr Owen Wright, and of course my wife, Mieke, to whom this book is gratefully dedicated.

ABBREVIATIONS

INFORMANTS

[See also above, p. xiii]

Baran	Baran Rizgar
C	Chîcho
EBS	Sheykh Eydo Baba Sheykh
FH	Feqîr Ḥajjî
FZ	Feqîr Zerdesht, son of SW
M	'Ebd el-Reḥman Mizûrî
MO	Dr Mamo Osman,
PX	Pîr Khidr Silêman
SS	Sami Shoresh
SW	The Sheykh el-Wezîr

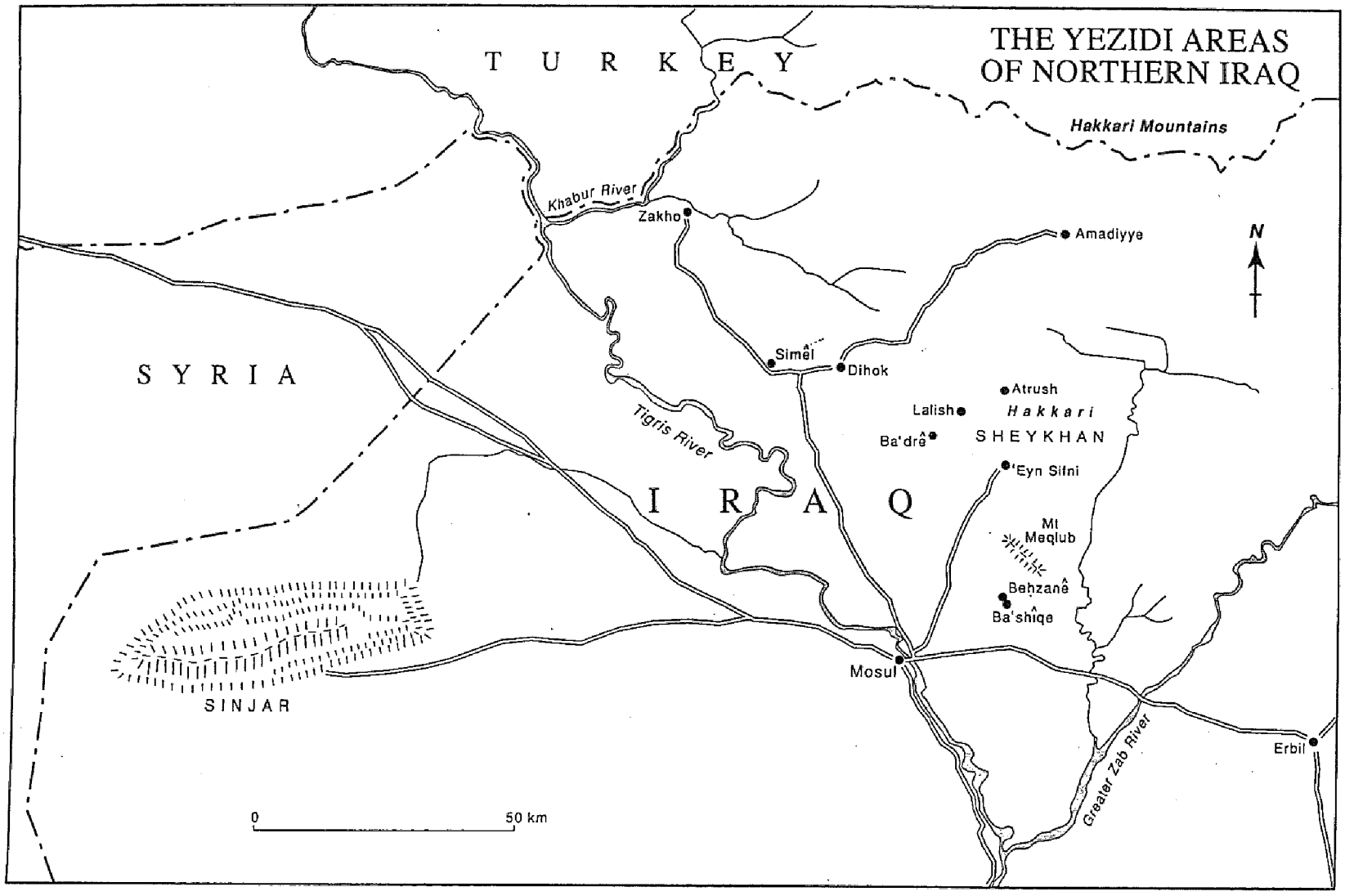
JOURNALS

AION	*Annali dell' Istituto Orientale di Napoli*
AIr	*Acta Iranica*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
JA	*Journal Asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
RANL	*Rendiconti dell' Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche*
RHR	*Revue de l' Histoire des Religions*
RMM	*Revue du Monde Musulman*
ROC	*Revue de l' Orient Chrétien*
RSO	*Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
StIr	*Studia Iranica*
TRS	*Transactions of the Ethnological Society*
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift fûr die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

OTHER

1st	first person
2nd	second person
3rd	third person
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
AH	Ahl-e Ḥaqq
A.H.	Anno Hegirae
Ar.	Arabic
Av.	Avestan
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
Comm.	Commentary
comp.	compound
dem.	demonstrative
encl.	enclitic
et al.	and others
f.	feminine
GBd.	*Greater Bundahishn*
gloss.	glossary
H.Q.	*Hijrī Qamarī*
ibid.	*ibidem*
i.e.	that is
imp.	imperative
ind.	indicative
inf.	infinitive
interr.	interrogative
Ir.	Iranian
lit.	literally
Kurd.	Kurdish
Kurm.	Kurmanji
loc. cit.	*loco citato*
m.	masculine
MR	*Meṣḥefa Reş* [Meshef Resh]
MT	*Ṭawûsê Melek* [Melek Tawus]
n.	note
nom.	nominative
NP.	New Persian
obl.	oblique
OIr.	Old Iranian
op. cit.	*opere citato*
part.	particle
pass.	passive

Pers.	Persian
pers. pron.	personal pronoun
pf.	perfect
Phl.	Pahlavi
pl.	plural
pres.	present
prep.	preposition
pron.	pronoun
pr. st.	present stem
q.v.	*quo vide*
sg.	singular
Skt.	Sanskrit
s.o.	someone
Sor.	Sorani
s.th.	something
subj.	subjunctive
s.v.	*sub voce*
T.	Text
Turk.	Turkish
v.	verse
viz	namely
Yez.	Yezidi
Zadsp.	*Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam*


THE YEZIDI AREAS
OF NORTHERN IRAQ
T U R K E Y
Hakkari Mountains
Khabur River
Zakho
Amadiyye
N
Simêl
Dihok
S Y R I A
Tigris River
Atrush
Lalish
Hakkari
Ba'drê
SHEYKHAN
'Eyn Sifni
I R A Q
Mt
Meqlub
Behzanê
Ba'shiqe
Mosul
SINJAR
Greater Zab River
Erbil
0
50 km

PART ONE

ON YEZIDISM

CHAPTER ONE

PERCEPTIONS OF YEZIDISM

There is probably no factor that has influenced the perception of Yezidism, both in the Middle East and in the West, as much as the erroneous epithet "devil-worshipper". In the past, when there was open hostility between the Muslim community and the Yezidis, the epithet probably did more than any theological debate[1] to make it clear to all that the Yezidis were non-Muslims who were not entitled to any protection under Islamic Law. Moreover, it seemed to justify the severe ill-treatment to which they were regularly subjected.[2] For Western scholars, a genuine academic curiosity about the phenomenon of devil-worship may have been blended with a romantic interest in this secretive but cleanly and friendly group of Oriental 'pagans', whose strange cult might contain traces of one or more of the great ancient religions of the Middle East.[3] This combination of romantic appeal with an intriguing intellectual challenge probably accounts for the intense academic interest in Yezidism of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.[4] Evidence of this interest began to emerge in the 1830s and 1840s with the works of travellers such as Ainsworth, Badger and Layard,[5] whose works clearly inspired further scholarly curiosity.

EARLY WESTERN ACCOUNTS

The opening pages of Layard's well-known chapter on the Yezidis could hardly fail to evoke considerable interest among educated Westerners, as is illustrated by the following passage:[6]

> The mysteries of the sect have been traced to the worship introduced by Semiramis, into the very mountains they now inhabit—a worship which, impure in its forms, led to every excess of debauchery and lust. The quiet and inoffensive demeanour of the Yezidis, and the cleanliness and order of their villages, do not certainly warrant these charges. Their known respect or fear for the evil principle has acquired for them the title "Worshippers of the Devil." Many stories are current as to the emblems by which this spirit is represented. They are believed by some to adore a cock, by others a peacock; but their worship, their tenets, and their origin were alike a subject of mystery which I felt anxious to clear up as far as I was able.

This is followed by a description of the loyalty of the Yezidis and the pleasing personality of their Prince.[7] The latter had narrowly escaped death during the massacre by the Bey of Rowanduz in 1832, and a son was born to him on the very day of Layard's arrival.[8] All of this presumably enhanced the interest of Layard's readers. Muslim persecution of the sect, including the capture of children,[9] is repeatedly referred to. The Yezidis' activities as highway robbers are made to seem almost noble:[10]

> It was not unnatural that the Yezidis should revenge themselves, whenever an opportunity might offer, upon their oppressors. They formed themselves into bands, and were long the terror of the country. No Mussulman that fell into their hands was spared. Caravans were plundered, and merchants murdered without mercy. Christians, however, were not molested; for the Yezidis looked upon them as fellow-sufferers for religion's sake.

A less sympathetic account of a Yezidi community and its faith was published in 1868:[11]

> The Yezidis who inhabit Mount Sinjar are a barbarous people who know neither prayers nor feasts, fasts, customs or laws, and who, without being subject to any established police authority, devote themselves to agriculture, while in fact living from robbery. The religion of the Yezidis is a kind of Manichaeism. They worship a single God in different guises, especially that of the sun, and make a point of not cursing the Evil One because he is according to them the creature of the Supreme Being and may one day be reinstated in His grace... They obey some Sheykhs and have the horrible and barbarous custom of selling their children in the towns. They are not circumcised,[12] by the way, and they detest the Turks, but seem to esteem the Christians. The Yezidis are officially subject to the Pasha of Mosul...but they are great thieves nonetheless, and they are always at war with the Arabs of Mesopotamia... The caravans suffer greatly from their banditries;[13] yet they are never entirely stripped of their possessions

> by these brigands, whose habit it is... to take only what can serve them as nourishment or clothing.

THE QUEST FOR ORIGINS

Many students of Yezidism at the time would probably have disagreed with the general tone of this passage. However, its description of that faith as "a kind of Manichaeism" reflects two prominent aspects of Yezidi Studies in the mid-nineteenth century, namely a strong preoccupation with the question of the origins of Yezidism, and a somewhat limited knowledge of its practices and tenets. Those who had studied the works of Layard and Badger would have been aware that the Yezidis themselves claim that the "Yezîd" from whom the name of their sect derives was the Umayyad caliph Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya (d. 683 CE), but that this information was regarded with scepticism by experts.[14] It was known that the Yezidis worship one God, and that they venerate Sheykh Adi, the Peacock Angel (a figure associated in some way with Satan) and, under him, a number[15] of lesser angels or divine beings. The Yezidis' preoccupation with purity and their veneration for the sun, fire and the other 'elements' had been remarked upon,[16] as had the role of the Flood in their myths and the fact that they practise a form of baptism. Layard's assertion[17] that they believe in the cosmogony of Genesis and the Second Coming of Christ was no doubt made in good faith, but was somewhat misleading. The main facts concerning the priestly hierarchy of Yezidism were known, although both Layard and Badger wrongly asserted that Pîrs were superior to Sheykhs.[18] Some Yezidi observances had been described, such as the three day fast in winter[19] and the practice of *ṭawūs gêrran*—the regular journeys of small groups of Qewwals to Yezidi communities where they would display an effigy of the Peacock Angel, chant *Qewls* and play music (see Ch. 4). Layard had pointed out that both Yezidis and "Sabians" (i.e. Mandaeans)[20] abhor the colour blue. Concerning the religious texts of the community, Layard made the following remarks:[21]

> The chants and hymns—the only form of prayer, which as far as I could ascertain, they possess—are, as I have already observed, in Arabic. They have, I believe, a sacred volume, containing their traditions, their hymns, directions for the performance of their rites, and other matters connected with their religion. It is preserved either at Baazani or Baasheika,[22] and is regarded with so much superstitious reverence that I failed in every endeavour to obtain a copy, or even to see it. It is considered unlawful to know how to read and

> write. There are only one or two persons amongst the Yezidis who can do either... Those who know how to read have been taught in order that they may preserve the sacred book, and may refer to it for the doctrines and ceremonies of the sect.

Both Badger and Layard[23] published a translation of a *Qaṣīda* attributed to Sheykh Adi. This text was described to Layard as "the sacred book of the Yezidis".[24] Badger says:[25]

> I believe this poem to be the only fragment now extant in any way connected with their creed, and I very much doubt whether they ever had any scriptures. Their occasional pretensions to possess such must be regarded as another artifice to evade the hatred of the Mohammedans, who are taught in the Korân to consider those who are not the "people of the book", i.e. have no written revelations, as fit objects for every species of indignity and persecution. Should this, however, be a mistaken conclusion, it is an undisputable fact, that hardly one Yezeedee exists who could understand a well written Arabic treatise... So then, if they really have any books, it is clear that they can make no use of them.

Since the Hymn in question is uninformative[26] and the contents of the rest of the Tradition were not known, scholars were dependent for their conclusions on the range of data outlined above. Although they thus had some knowledge of Yezidism, the need for a theoretical framework—such as might be provided by a clear insight in the origin and development of the faith—was evidently keenly felt. The question of the origins of Yezidism was clearly uppermost in the researchers' minds. Layard,[27] while admitting Christian, Islamic, and some Gnostic and Manichaean influences, attached great importance to a tradition claiming that the Yezidis originally came from southern Iraq. This led him to postulate that the origins of the faith are Sabian or Chaldean. Badger,[28] on the other hand, believed that both the names "Yezd" and "Sheykh Adi" were used to denote the good deity, the beneficent opponent of the evil Melek Tawus. He drew the obvious parallel with Zoroastrianism, and argued that the original form of that religion "was corrupted by the Persian Magians by a various mixture of foreign idolatry". In Badger's view it is again the Sabians who were chiefly responsible for introducing these idolatrous elements.

The links between the Yezidis and the Sabians were also explored by

Chwolsohn,[29] and references to similarities between Yezidism and Mandaeism recur in the later literature. Besides the aversion to the colour blue, they include such striking elements as similar food taboos,[30] and the representation of the Devil as a peacock called Ṭawūs (which latter trait they also share with the Druzes and the Takhtajis).[31] Chwolsohn concluded that the cults of both Sabians and Yezidis must go back to an ancient faith, which was unrelated to Zoroastrianism.[32] Some years earlier a German historian of religion, A. Neander, had come to a similar conclusion, albeit for different reasons. Neander argued that the cult of the Fallen Angel was so unusual that, if similar beliefs are found among another group, the Yezidis must either have had close links with that group or their beliefs must have a common origin. He found such a group in an eleventh-century Byzantine sect, the Enthusiasts or Euchytes, who in turn had links with the Bogomils and Paulicians. Neander's thesis then formed the basis of the work of N.Ya. Marr, which led him to conclude that Yezidism was the heritage of a pre-Islamic Kurdish paganism, which he believed to have been of non-Indo-European ("Japhetic") origin.[33]

The similarity between the word *ṭawûs* and the name of the ancient Near Eastern divinity Tammūz led some scholars to speculate on the possible identity of the two.[34] The theory was first put forward by Lidzbarski,[35] challenged on etymological and typological grounds by Joseph,[36] taken up again by Mingana and Driver,[37] and finally dimissed by Furlani.[38]

To end this enumeration of speculative efforts to find connections between Yezidism and other religions, mention should be made of the view, apparently held by local Nestorians, that Sheykh Adi was in fact the legendary Christian Apostle Addaï, who worked for the faith in Mesopotamia.[39] Attempts to stress the influence of Christianity are occasionally found in the later literature.[40]

THE IDENTIFICATION OF SHEYKH ADI

After the early accounts of Layard, Badger and other travellers, it was the work of a local resident, the French vice-consul in Mosul, N. Siouffi, that was to mark a new phase in Yezidi Studies. First of all, Siouffi demostrated that the Yezidi Sheykh Adi was in fact a historical figure and, moreover, a Muslim.[41] He identified him as the Sufi saint 'Adī ibn Musāfir, whose life and career were relatively well documented in Islamic sources. The importance of this discovery can of course hardly be overestimated. Several decades later, in 1911, Frank's exhaustive study of the

relevant source material consolidated and expanded the information available to the Western student concerning this intriguing figure, and virtually all subsequent studies depend on the work of these two scholars. In another article,[42] Siouffi published the first collection of orally transmitted myths, legends and traditions of the Yezidis. In the course of time these accounts came to be regarded as an essential part of our meagre corpus of Yezidi lore;[43] at the time, however, the Editors of the Journal in which the article appeared were clearly embarrassed by its "patchy and puerile" contents,[44] and found it necessary to defend their decision to publish it.

THE 1872 PETITION

In view of the evident academic disdain for accounts based on local research of the oral traditions of Yezidism, it was perhaps fortunate for the progress of the study of the sect that towards the end of the nineteenth century a written document appeared which was soon regarded by some as "the *locus classicus* on the subject of the Yezidi religion".[45] This was a petition to the Ottoman Government to exempt the Yezidis from military service,[46] drawn up in 1872 by the secular and religious authorities of the community. It contained an exposition of the main observances of the faith as perceived by its contemporary leaders. English and German versions of the text were published in the last decade of the nineteenth century, French and Italian versions were to follow later.[47] The following is a summary of the text:

(0) It is impossible for Yezidis[48] to serve in the army.

(1) Every Yezidi must visit the image of Melek Tawus three times a year, in April, September and November[49] of the Julian calendar. If they fail to do so they become unbelievers.[50]

(2) Every member of the sect[51] must visit the shrine of Sheykh Adi at least once a year, from 15 to 20 September.

(3) At sunrise every member of the sect must go to a place where he can see the rising sun, and where there are no Muslims, Christians or Jews.

(4) Every Yezidi must kiss the hand of his 'Brother of the Hereafter',[52] who is the servant of the *Mehdî*, and the hand of his Sheykh or his Pîr every day.

(5) When Muslims pray in the morning, they say, "I take refuge in God, etc."[53] If a Yezidi should hear this he must kill the person who says it, and kill himself.

(6) When a Yezidi dies, his 'Brother of the Hereafter', or his Sheykh or Pîr, or one of the Qewwals, must be with him and say, "Oh servant of Melek Tawus—great is His dignity—you must die in the religion of him who is worshipped by us, Melek Tawus—great is his dignity—and not die in any other religion. And if anyone of the religion of Islam or the religion of the Christians or the religion of the Jews or of religions other than that of the Melek come to you and speak to you, do not think that they are right and do not believe them. And if you regard as true, or believe in any other religion than that of him who is worshipped by us, Melek Tawus—great is His dignity—then you shall die an unbeliever."

(7) We have a thing called the 'blessing of Sheykh Adi', namely earth from his tomb. Every Yezidi must carry some of this in his pocket, and eat some of it every morning. If this earth is not found upon him when he dies, he dies an unbeliever.

(8) A Yezidi, if he wishes to fast, must do so at home, not elsewhere. Every day of the fast he must go to the house of his Sheykh or[54] Pîr in the morning to begin his fast, and to break his fast he must return there to drink two or three glasses of the holy wine of the Sheykh or Pîr. If he fails to do this his fast is not acceptable.

(9) If a Yezidi travels abroad and stays there for at least a year,[55] when he returns home his wife is unlawful for him and none of us may give him a wife.

(10) Just as each Yezidi has a 'Brother of the Hereafter', he also has a 'Sister of the Hereafter'.[56] If a Yezidis has a new shirt made, his 'Sister of the Hereafter' must make the opening at the neck with her own hands.

(11) If a Yezidi has a new shirt made, he must dip it in the holy water of the shrine of Sheykh Adi before puttting it on.

(12) We may not wear dark blue clothes, or comb our hair with the comb of a Muslim, Christian of Jew, or shave with a razor which any other man has used, unless the razor is washed in the holy water of the Shrine of Sheykh Adi.

(13) A Yezidi may not enter a closet, or go into a public bath,[57] or eat with the spoon of a Muslim; nor may he drink from the cup of a Muslim or of one who belongs to one of the other religions.

(14) The Yezidis do not eat fish,[58] gourds, *bamiyye,*[59] beans, cabbage and lettuce, nor may they live in a place where lettuce etc., are grown.

A LATER DOCUMENT

In 1908 a scion of the dynasty of the secular rulers of the Yezidis, Isma'îl Beg son of 'Ebdî Beg,[60] drew up a somewhat similar document at the request of the Armenian Yezidis. This document seems to reflect the preoccupations of its author who, according to Guest,[61] "wanted to revitalise the Yezidi community", and "travelled around the Yezidi communities as a self-appointed apostle, preaching, blessing and collecting alms". The following is a translation of the text:[62]

(1) We believe in one God, the Creator of Heaven, Earth and of all that is alive.

(2) Our Prophet is Êzîd.

(3) The Yezidis have no scripture; God's Word is handed down from father to son according to the tradition of *Gyli-e Azim*.[63]

(4) It is forbidden for Yezidis to enter into relations with those who belong to other nations. Otherwise they incur the curse of God.

(5) The Yezidis must treat other nations with respect, for all exist in accordance with God's Will.

(6) The Yezidis must serve God according to the rules laid down by our Prophet Êzîd. Otherwise they incur the curse of God.

(7) A Yezidi may not abduct the legal wife of another. No Yezidi may help the abductor or the abducted, or provide shelter. The one who is abducted must be returned to her husband, and the abductor shall be tried according to Yezidi law. If the abducted woman refuses to return to her husband's house, she shall be excommunicated.

(8) No Yezidi may marry the wife of the brother of his father or mother; otherwise the procedure shall be as specified under Article 7.

(9) The Yezidi clergy is divided into three clans: the Sheykhs of Sheykh Hesen,[64] of Sheykh Shems and of Sheyhk Obekir. Every Sheykh must choose a wife from his own clan.

(10) The Pîrs are divided into two clans: Pîrê Hosmamama and Pîrê Pîrafata and the others (like) Pîrê Omarkhale[65] and others. Every Pîr must choose a wife from his own clan.

(11) When the priestly men of the clans mentioned in Arts. 9 and 10 marry girls from other clans, they lose the right to receive gifts from laymen. The laymen

may not recognise them as priestly men, and must expel them from their midst.

(12) The Yezidi laymen are called *mirîd*. They are not entitled to marry the daughters of the priestly classes, only their own. In case of offence, severe measures shall be taken.

(13) God created the world and all creatures in six days, the seventh day he rested. A Yezidi shall therefore work six days and rest the seventh, namely the Saturday.[66] Offenders shall pay a penalty of five roubles. It is the task of the *Qaḍī* who is appointed by myself in every district for the performance of acts of religion, to watch over the observance of this rule. My appointment of a *Qaḍī* is confirmed by the Government, i.e., by the Governors. Each *Qaḍī* has a seal (engraved) with his name and the name of his district.

(14) No Yezidi may divorce his wife unless he can prove infidelity, viz. in the presence of at least three witnesses. In the case of an offence the culprit shall be severely punished.

(15) If a Yezidi betrothes his son and he cannot pay the bride price, he may not leave the bride in her father's house for more than three years.

(16) The bride price for a girl may not be higher than a hundred roubles. If one takes more, the rest shall be taken away and handed over to the *Qaḍī* of the district. The culprit shall be punished.

(17) The bride price of a widow may not be higher than forty-five to fifty roubles. In case of transgression the culprit shall be punished.

(18) It is strictly forbidden for a Yezidi to lend money against interest.

(19) Usury is strictly forbidden.

(20) It is forbidden to have a bath, change underclothes or have sexual intercourse on a Wednesday, for there is an Evil Wednesday which one cannot tell beforehand.

(21) The Yezidi priestly men must wear a beard. If they do not, then the laymen need not recognise them as priestly men and need not give them offerings.

(22) Theft is strictly forbidden, for it is said, "The left hand shall not use the work of the right hand." Thieves must be handed over to the authorities. Receivers (of stolen goods) shall be severely punished.

(23) Yezidis must deal honestly with all nations and all men, and not injure them or use another's property without his knowledge. A guilty man incurs the curse of God.

(24) The Yezidis must obey the laws of the land in which they find themselves.

(25) In every Yezidi village there must be a Chawûsh[67] who, at the death of a Yezidi, shall fast for seven days and recite the *Qewl* at the dead person's grave.

(26) In every Yezidi village three men shall be appointed to watch over the observance of these rules. Negligence on the part of the guardians incurs the curse of God.

(27) A Yezidi may not swear a false oath. Whoever disobeys this law shall be severely punished. The text of the oath is determined by me personally, in accordance with the Yezidi faith. The Yezidis may use the alphabets of other nations for the purpose of printing the oath formula, since they have no (alphabet) of their own.

(28) Affairs of division (of property) and separation shall be submitted to the district *Qaḍī*.

(29) Every Yezidi must hold a commemorative feast for his dead relatives once a year.

(30) The Yezidis must build schools and instruct their children in science and languages.

(31) The supervision of the schools as regards moral and spiritual matters is the task of the *Qaḍī* of the district, who should also occupy himself with (questions of their) material support.[68]

The first of these two documents elevates to the status of religious obligations some practices which most Yezidis would consider to be no more than pious ideals.[69] The second, with its preoccupation with such notions as a Yezidi system of jurisdiction and schooling for Yezidi children, goes much further. It appears to represent one prominent individual's perception of Yezidism as it ought to be practised in the twentieth century.[70]

THE 'SACRED BOOKS'

The publication of the 1872 document, as a written source of undoubted authenticity, was an important event in the history of the study of Yezidism. It was to be overshadowed, however, by more spectacular discoveries. Siouffi, who brought about the second stage in the history of Yezidi Studies by identifying Sheykh Adi, also adumbrated the next. In an interview with him,[71] the Baba

Sheykh of the time confirmed the existence of two sacred texts, about which rumours had long existed. These were entitled *Jilwe*[72] (i.e., "Splendour" or "Unveiling") and *Meṣḥefa Resh* ("The Black Book", hereafter *Meshef Resh*). Both works were said to be in Arabic and the latter was described as a commentary upon the former.[73] In the interview the texts were referred to as "books", and in fact written copies were to appear not long afterwards.[74]

In 1874, it seems, Ishak of Bartella—a Christian priest who had spent much of his life in Ba'shîqe, the home of the Yezidi Qewwals—completed a long manuscript in Syriac about the history, traditions and observances of the Yezidis.[75] It has been suggested that his information derived largely from a manual used for the training of Qewwals by a Yezidi called Mulla Haydar.[76] This Mulla Haydar had also been Siouffi's source of information,[77] and he may have been helpful to foreign researchers on other occasions.[78] A manuscript of Ishak's work, which was composed in the form of question and answers, was long kept in the library of the monastery of Rabban Hormuzd at Alkosh. An Arabic version of the text was in the possession of Jeremiah Shamir, who had once been a monk in that monastery, in 1884.[79] Later in life Shamir was, among other things, a dealer in books and manuscripts. From the late 1880s onwards, he was instrumental in obtaining for Western collectors a number of manuscripts which included the texts of the *Jilwe* and the *Meshef Resh*. Perhaps significantly, these texts do not seem to have pride of place in the manuscripts, but simply form part of a collection of texts about Yezidism. Most of these collections include an Arabic text entitled *Tārīkh al-Azdiyya fī 'l-Mawṣil wa Aṭrāfihā* ("History of the Yezidis in Mosul and its Environs"),[80] and a Syriac treatise, *Extract from the History of the Yezidis*.[81] The latter text appears to be an abridged version in narrative prose of Ishak's catechism. The 1872 Petition is included in some of these collections, as part of the *Tārīkh al-Azdiyya*.[82] In the beginning of the twentieth century, there were at least half a dozen manuscripts of the Yezidi 'Sacred Books' in existence.[83] The provenance of these collections was shrouded in mystery but, as Guest puts it,[84] "the common thread running through these conflicting and sometimes implausible accounts suggests that the texts of the Sacred Books were obtained from the Yezidis by trickery and that Jeremiah Shamir was somehow involved."

A publication of 1891[85] contained verbatim translations of passages from both texts.[86] The first full translation of the texts, by E.G. Browne, appeared in 1895.[87]

In 1909 Isya Joseph published the Arabic texts of both works, with an English translation.[88] Two years later, in 1911, Père Anastase Marie announced his discovery of what he believed to be the original Kurdish versions.[89] These were written in an otherwise unknown alphabet which bore no obvious resemblance to any other Middle Eastern script, but strangely had separate characters representing Arabic consonants which do not normally occur in Kurdish. Père Anastase showed his find to the Orientalist M. Bittner of Vienna, who published the texts in 1913, with a German translation. Bittner, who had at his disposal Oscar Mann's work on the Mukri dialect of Kurdish[90] but was evidently unfamiliar with other forms of Central Kurdish, declared the language of the manuscripts to be an archaic form of Kurdish, and clearly regarded Anastase's texts as authentic.

Before the world of scholarship had time to build on these spectacular discoveries, however, an article appeared which challenged many of the assumptions made about the texts. In this publication,[91] Alphonse Mingana rejected the notion that either the Arabic versions of the 'Sacred Books', Ishak of Bartella's work, or the *Extracts* represented an ancient scriptural tradition. He suggested that the author of all these texts was Jeremiah Shamir. Mingana pointed out that there is no evidence that copies of the texts existed before Shamir's time. He further argued that, since only one Yezidi family was permitted to learn to read and write, one would have expected the Sacred Books to be in its care. If these books had a traditional role in the religious life of the community, moreover, it might be expected that they would be publicly read on some occasions, such as the annual assemblies of the sect. Also, since Yezidis, Muslims and Christians had lived closely together for fourteen hundred years, Mingana felt that members of the other communities would at least have heard rumours if such books had existed. None of this is in fact the case. Mingana then pointed to some statements in the texts which make it seem unlikely that they were written before the early nineteenth century, and to philological points which in his view suggested that the Arabic versions of the texts were written by a man who thought in Syriac, Jeremiah Shamir's first language. As far as Père Anastase's discovery was concerned, Mingana called in question the plausibility of various points in the priest's account of this discovery. He went on to point out that neither he himself nor the Reverend A.N. Andrus, a long-time friend of the Yezidi community, had been able to find any confirmation of the existence of such books, and that the Prince of the Yezidis (see Ch. 5) had in

fact disclaimed any knowledge of it. Nor could Mingana find any plausible reason why a Yezidi should have translated his Sacred Books from Kurdish into Arabic, why such books should be kept in the Jebel Sinjar area rather than at a recognised centre of religious learning such as Ba'shîqe or Beḥzanê, or why the different versions of the texts should show variants of the kind found here.[92] The existence of a hitherto unknown script, unrelated to any of the alphabets used in the area, seemed to him unlikely.

To these arguments Mingana could have added Isma'îl Beg's emphatic claim that the Yezidis have no scriptures, and the *ipsissima verba* of the *Jilwe*: "I guide without a scripture".[93] There was also the question of the type of Kurdish used in Anastase's version of the works. As Edmonds[94] realised, far from being an archaic form of Kurdish, the language of the texts is modern Sorani—a dialect spoken in an area of Kurdistan where there has been no known Yezidi presence since the sixteenth century,[95] and which probably did not develop a written literature until the end of the eighteenth.[96] Moreover, to the present day no Yezidi in good standing has publicly acknowledged that these works represent a genuine scriptural tradition.[97]

Mingana's conclusions were later challenged by Furlani.[98] Implicitly admitting that none of his other counter-arguments constituted proof of the ancient origin of the extant texts, the Italian scholar advanced the following as his final and, he thought, conclusive argument:[99]

> The Kurdish text first published by Anastase...is written in a medieval Kurdish dialect that is no longer spoken in our time...The Kurdish dialect of the books demonstrates in a definitive and conclusive manner that these are authentic, i.e., they cannot have been written long after the end of the Middle Ages, or the beginning of the modern age.

Since, as we saw, Furlani's fundamental contention was based on a misunderstanding, it might seem easy to dismiss the 'Sacred Books' altogether, concluding that the frantic interest of Western researchers probably led some figure of doubtful integrity to produce clever forgeries. There are several arguments, however, to suggest that such a solution would be too simple. First of all, a number of travellers' accounts[100] show that at least a section of the Yezidi community believes that one or more Sacred Books exist, although there is no clear indication as to what they may contain. Moreover, both the names *Jilwe* and *Meshef Resh* are

mentioned in accounts by authors who wrote long before the question became an issue, or who denied the existence of written Sacred Books altogether, as in the case of Isma'îl Beg. A document drawn up by an eighteenth-century Muftī[101] contains the following statement: "Adultery is lawful in their eyes, if it is committed with the assent (of the husband). The person who asserts this has told me that he has seen it written in a book called *Jilwe*, which they attribute to Sheykh Adi." Empson[102] mentions a Dr Forbes who, "when on a visit to the Sinjar in 1838, heard of the Black Book [*Meshef Resh*], and was told that Sheykh Adi was the author."[103] While these statements prove that works known as *Jilwe* and *Meshef Resh* formed part of the religious tradition of the Yezidis, they may in fact have referred to texts which did not exist in written form. Either the Muftī or his informant could easily have substituted the notion of a written book for the unfamiliar one of an oral text. Isma'îl Beg's statement that the Yezidis have no scripture, God's Word being "handed down from father to son according to the tradition of "*Gyli-e Azim*" [i.e. the *Jilwe*],"[104] shows that a son of the Princely dynasty thought of the *Jilwe* as an orally transmitted religious text. More recently, in 1968, Professor Joyce Blau visited Jebel Sinjar and recorded a text which her informant called the *Meshef Resh*.[105] The recording does not contain the text of the *Meshef* as it is known to us—it largely consists of an episode of Yezidi legendary history[106]—but the informant's assertion can confidently be taken to imply that the *Meshef Resh* was thought of locally as an oral text which could be recited like other such texts. That there was also a tradition associating the text with a written book is indicated by the fact that Professor Blau was shown a blank exercise book, which was said to be the *Meshef Resh*.

The notion that all extant versions of the 'Sacred Books' derive from an oral tradition receives further support from the type of variants that occur. Although the wording of parallel passages is largely similar, some texts contain passages which are omitted in others.[107] Grave scribal carelessness of this kind would be unexpected in the case of a Sacred Book known to be of great interest to the prospective purchaser, but such phenomena are known to occur frequently in oral traditions. Furthermore, Ishak of Bartella's account of the creation of the world corresponds almost entirely with a passage that occurs, somewhat curiously, towards the end of the *Meshef Resh*,[108] partly summing up what has been expounded in detail before, and adding a new account of the creative activities of

the Angels. Ishak's version of the latter part of the passage is more complete than its counterpart in any variant of the *Meshef*, but it is closer to Anastase/Bittner's version, which has never been attributed to Jeremiah Shamir, than to that of Browne/Guest.[109] Unless one were to invoke some remarkably subtle forger's ploy, this seems to contradict Mingana's thesis that Shamir was the author of both the work attributed to Ishak and the manuscript used by Browne. It would, on the other hand, be wholly consistent with the theory that Qewwals were trained to remember both texts separately, the shorter text being used at times to elucidate the longer one.[110] This may have led to the inclusion of both texts in the written version of the *Meshef*, while Ishak's informant regarded the shorter text as sufficient. Furthermore, the essential elements of the Cosmogony as set out in the *Meshef Resh*, are confirmed by the contents of the *Qewls*,[111] about whose authenticity there can be no doubt. The information contained in that text can further be shown to go back to an ancient, pre-Islamic tradition about which neither Shamir nor any of his contemporaries could possibly have known (see Ch. 3). These considerations can be regarded as additional evidence that the *Meshef* at least represents a genuine tradition. This in turn makes it seem likely that the *Jilwe* is also to be regarded as authentic. Both texts may have been taught to Qewwals and other 'men of religion' as part of their training.[112]

It seems probable, therefore, that these texts were held to contain the essential teachings of the founders of the faith as they were once laid down in written texts of the same name. The *Jilwe* proclaims the sovereignty and omnipotence of Melek Tawus,[113] while the *Meshef Resh* contains accounts of the Cosmogony, the origins of mankind, the ancient history of the sect, and a list of prohibitions.

Such considerations, of course, did not play a role in Mingana's arguments or, it seems, in the thought of those who came after him. In fact it could be argued that Minaga was the first in a series of scholars whose works, although well reasoned and containing much that was true, presented unbalanced and ultimately sterile accounts of Yezidism which contributed to the decline of academic interest in the sect. Mingana's arguments, first of all, were ultimately based on considerations of plausibility,[114] and as such incapable of definite proof. Since it was implicit in the terms of the debate that the 'Sacred Books' of Yezidism were either to be regarded as ancient and authentic or as wholly spurious, few scholars naturally cared to devote their energies to a further exploration of Yezidism until the question had

been resolved either way. Moreover, while Yezidism had earlier been perceived as a syncretistic and somewhat undefined paganism, the slow but fascinating emergence of what seemed to be a written canon had probably led researchers to think of the faith as being based on a scriptural tradition, like most other religions of the area. Mingana's work, which was not concerned with the question of oral transmission, must therefore have left many scholars with a mental image of Yezidism as a scriptural faith without a scripture.

LATER ACCOUNTS OF YEZIDISM

It was the great merit of the work of the Italian Islamist M. Guidi, that he demonstrated the existence of a pro-Umayyad movement in Kurdistan at a time prior to the arrival of 'Adī b. Musāfir—who was himself of Umayyad descent—and that he threw new light on the early history of the sect.[115] Guidi emphatically admitted the influence of "Iranian dualism"[116] on the development of the Yezidi tradition, and he was aware of the pluralist quality of its beliefs.[117] His very erudite articles, however, sought above all to present Yezidism as being essentially a form of extremist Islam. They bear witness to Guidi's vast knowledge of Arabic sources referring to Islamic sects, but show little appreciation of the problems involved in applying to a non-literate faith like Yezidism criteria and lines of reasoning normally adopted for the study of doctrinal systems in which writing plays a more prominent role. Guidi, moreover, had no hesitation in deducing from a literature written by and for orthodox Muslims, and from a comparison with little-known Islamic sects, the realities of a tradition whose exclusively Islamic character could not be taken for granted.[118] His views, however, proved extremely influential. Not long after the publication of his first two articles, Lescot wrote:[119]

> Only a few years ago the works of Aḥmad Pasha Taymūr and 'Abbās 'Azzawī, superbly restated by Guidi, have brought the problem to its final solution, paradoxical though it may seem at first, for they present Yezidism as an Islamic heresy while in its present form this religious system shows no similarity whatever with Islam.

The effect of Guidi's work was that from the 1930s onwards, the study of Yezidism came within the remit of Islamic Studies, to which it could contribute little or nothing, while students of other disciplines could feel little inducement to occupy themselves with it. Moreover, Yezidism now came to be perceived, not only as a

scriptural faith without a scripture, but as a form of Islam which was no longer either recognised or recognisable as such.

Roger Lescot's wholehearted endorsement of Guidi's findings lent considerable weight to these ideas. Unlike Guidi, the well-known Kurdologist Lescot had visited the Yezidi communities of Jebel Sinjar in Iraq and Jebel Sim'an in Syria. His work was to prove the last major contribution to Yezidi Studies for a long time. It is perhaps ironic that, although his book made enormous contributions to our knowledge of Yezidi lore, Lescot's fundamental approach to his subject must in its turn have furthered the decline of its study. Having made short shrift of most of his predecessors[120] and dismissed as inauthentic all known Yezidi texts except a later work by Isma'îl Beg[121]—which he merely calls "a tissue of contradictions"—he describes his dealings with his informants as follows:[122]

> It is not, as is often claimed, that the Yezidis make a mystery of their beliefs. On the contrary, once they have gained confidence they enjoy talking (about them), proud to instruct a partner in conversation whom they generally regard as more experienced than themselves. However, being of unbelievable slowness of mind,[123] they do not properly understand the questions one asks them and answer without exactitude or precision. Moreover, they only have a very imperfect knowledge of their own religion. Numerous interviews with persons of all classes have enabled us to gauge how little the members of the sect are concerned with questions about the hereafter.

A CRITIQUE OF EARLIER VIEWS

The Yezidis, it seems, have not only failed to produce an acceptable version of their sacred texts and let go of their true Islamic identity, they have also forsaken any claims to intelligence. Still, unfortunate as the passage may seem, it illustrates a number of assumptions about the Yezidi religion which are shared by many Westerners, and which need to be revised in order to gain a true understanding of that faith. It seems natural to Lescot, for example, that the members of any religion should at least have an adequate knowledge of, and interest in the teachings of their faith. Religion, for him, implies articulate beliefs. Lescot's frequent references to contradictions, moreover, reflect his assumption that such beliefs should be essentially unified and coherent, and generally conform to the principles of Aristotelian logic. Although Lescot stresses the oral character of the Yezidi tradition,[124] he appears to have disregarded the implications of such a system for

the community's understanding of such concepts as religion, history, and indeed the nature of truth. The plaint that Yezidis are not intelligent enough to explain Yezidism, moreover, implies that there is an ideal version of the faith which has a separate existence, unconnected with the community of believers. This, it seems, is the form of Yezidism that should be described by researchers. Such views—which are reflected in other scholars' work to a far greater degree than in Lescot's—clearly have their origin in the study of written religions, where the corpus of scriptures and commentaries can be regarded as the objective embodiment of the essential teachings of the faith. In religions where only an oral tradition exists, however, teachings or insights which once formed part of the system are lost when they are no longer handed down as part of the faith. By definition, therefore, the only forms of an orally transmitted religion that can be said to be representative at any given moment are those which are known to its followers. While it can be helpful, and indeed necessary, to seek to reconstruct earlier stages of a religion of this type in order to explain the system in its contemporary form, such hypothetical ideals should not take precedence over the often complex contemporary realities in the study of a faith.

Even in theory, being a Yezidi is a matter of birth, not belief.[125] Personal convictions may result from membership of the community, they cannot lead to it.[126] Perhaps as a consequence of this, while piety is much respected, orthodoxy—a strongly held faith in the teachings of religious authorities combined with a rejection of alternative beliefs—does not appear to be considered especially meritorious. Yezidism attaches greater value to orthopraxy. Participation in festivals, observance of some prohibitions and formal obedience to such authorities as the Prince, the Sheykh and the Pîr, are essential elements of religious life. Theoretically, the spiritual guidance of the community is incumbent on these and other 'men of religion', such as Qewwals and Feqîrs.[127] In practice, since membership of all these groups is hereditary,[128] the quality of such guidance depends on the individual interests and talents of the authority in question. However, it never includes the teaching of an 'official' form of the faith—a monolithic, coherent system of dogma—since no such thing exists. While considerable energy is invested in the oral teaching of religious texts and traditions, the community lacks the means of training priests in the type of theology usually found in literate traditions, nor would it have much use for the conclusions of such

a discipline. The point of interest is not, as Lescot seems to imply, that Yezidis have little articulate knowledge about their religion and do not seem especially interested, but rather that it is characteristic of Yezidism that no particular virtue attaches to having such knowledge, or to a strong belief in priestly teachings, as opposed to faith in the divine beings. The virtual absence of an 'official' body of teachings—which in many religions effectively masks any contradictions or variations in the beliefs actually held by the faithful—has undoubtedly contributed to some of the things that irked Lescot in his contact with Yezidis. Since different people have been taught different things, Yezidis do occasionally contradict one another. Even a Sheykh, moreover, may well look blankly at a researcher who asks him to expound the teaching of Yezidism on, say, the question of predestination. Furthermore, not having been trained in Aristotelian logic, some Yezidis seem capable of holding mutually exclusive beliefs at the same time,[129] while not paying much attention to the implications of either.

The Yezidi tradition can only be understood as the product of a long period of oral transmission. The lack of a written tradition has, as we saw, prevented the development of a formal theology, or the emergence of a single, monolithic system of beliefs. It has helped to shape a tradition whose underlying assumptions may seem strange to outsiders, but make excellent sense in a relatively isolated and non-literate environment. In Yezidi communities, people listen to religious discourse primarily in order to gain some understanding of the deeper mysteries of reality. They are hardly equipped to ask critical questions based on a leisurely comparison of conflicting propositions. In the absence of written sources, which at least partly reflect the objective reality of the past, an awareness of the distinction between mythical and factual accounts does not figure prominently in Yezidi thought. Historical accuracy is clearly felt to be less significant than the relevance of accounts to the needs and realities of the community. To a Yezidi, if history is to be remembered as part of religion, it should make sense. It should also be relatively simple, since detailed accounts full of accurate but pointless facts are plainly impossible to remember. In the process of constructing a 'relevant'—i.e., legendary—version of events, questions of time and of the separateness of individual identities are often disregarded. Figures who lived centuries apart can easily be represented as being essentially the same person.[130] For similar reasons, it is characteristic of the Yezidi tradition that the same role can be attributed to one

figure in one account, and to another elsewhere. Such concepts as reincarnation, the manifestation of divine beings in human form, and a blurred dividing line between supernatural beings and humans, are also of fundamental importance for the understanding of Yezidism.[131] Nor are these mere priestly devices, invoked to lend credence to an essentially simplified version of history; they are deeply ingrained in traditional Yezidi thought.

These aspects of Yezidism do not pose problems for Western researchers only. They can seem equally baffling to those Yezidis who received their secular education in a Western-type University—illiteracy now being a thing of the past, at least for most Yezidi men—but whose understanding of their faith derives from the teaching of parents or local 'men of religion'. Underlying beliefs of the kind discussed above are assimilated, rather than explicitly examined, by students in oral religious teaching. They tend, therefore, to remain part of the 'traditional' realm of thought even when more modern ideas inform a person's views of other aspects of life. It is not unusual to see a look of utter perplexity on the face of an educated Yezidi when asking an analytical, 'Western-type' question in the middle of his 'traditional' exposition of an element of his religion. The first generation of Yezidi intellectuals is currently facing the challenge of bridging the gap between traditional and modern, academic and religious, 'Eastern' and 'Western' perceptions of Yezidism, and of offering their conclusions to their own community and to the world at large.

Notes

[1] Since Yezidism evolved out of the 'Adawiyya, the Sufi Order founded by Sheykh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, their expulsion from the Islamic *umma* must have been a relatively late or gradual development, in which public opinion no doubt played in important role. Cf. the evidence of al-Maqrīzī, below, p. 34f.
[2] The capture of Yezidi children for the slave-trade formed a source of income for the Muslim authorities of the region in the first half of the nineteenth century and probably before that (Layard 1849: I. 277-8). On the prohibition of such practices in 1849 see Guest 1987: 99-100. On the status of the Yezidis and their ill-treatment by Muslims generally see Layard, *loc. cit.*; Lescot 1938: 121f.
[3] These elements can all be detected in Layard's work, but they recur in several other books of this and later periods. On the Yezidis' cleanliness see Layard 1849: I. 271, 287, 301-2; Badger 1852: I. 132. Among the local Muslims the Yezidis have an undeserved reputation for being physically unclean as well as ritually impure.
[4] That the general public were also interested in the Yezidis at this time is suggested by a number of non-academic publications, see Guest 1987: 256f, and esp. p. 257 under "Anon".
[5] On these and other early travellers see Guest 1987: 73f. Travellers' accounts from earlier periods also contained descriptions of Yezidis communities, see Perdrizet 1903; Guest 1987: 47f and Fuccaro, forthcoming article.
[6] Layard 1849: I. 271.
[7] Layard 1849: I. 273f.
[8] Layard 1849: I. 274.
[9] Layard 1849: I. 277-8.
[10] Layard 1849: I. 278.
[11] Charmoy 1868: 69-70. Unless otherwise stated, translations of texts quoted are by the present author.
[12] The last two statements are very doubtful. The story about the selling of children may have its origin in the presence in slave-markets of Yezidi children captured by Muslims. Although it is true that some Yezidi tribes do not practise circumcision (see Badger 1852: I. 129 and below, Ch. 6, n. 121), elsewhere circumcision is now not only generally performed, but is linked to the institution of the *kerafet* (on which see below, pp. 136-7), and surrounded by a well-established set of observances (see below, p. 159), which is unlikely to have evolved since the mid-nineteenth century.
[13] The same information is found in Badger 1852: I. 133
[14] Layard, 1849: I. 300; Badger 1852: I. 112. Both connect the name with Pers. *yazd(ān)*.
[15] Layard (1849: I. 299) names seven angels who are said to be inferior to Melek Tawus. Many Yezidis, on the other hand, would consider Melek Tawus to be a member of the Heptad.
[16] Layard 1849: I. 300-1; Badger 1852: I. 117.
[17] Layard 1849: I. 299.
[18] Layard 1849: I. 303-4; Badger 1852: I. 131.
[19] Layard 1849: I. 304; Badger 1852: I. 129.
[20] Layard 1849: I. 301. Many sources use the term "Sabian" to denote both an ancient cult based at Ḥarrān, and the Mandaeans of lower Mesopotamia. When points of similarity between Sabians and Yezidis are discussed the word generally refers to the latter.
[21] Layard 1849: I. 305-6.
[22] I.e., Beḥzanê and Ba'shîqe, the two villages in the Sheykhan area where the Qewwals live.
[23] Badger 1852: I. 113-15; Layard 1853: 89-92. On their controversy regarding the authorship of the translation see Guest 1987: 106.
[24] Layard 1853: 89.
[25] Badger 1852: I. 115.
[26] Layard's translation is reproduced in Guest 1987: 204-6. On four *qaṣīdas* which are also attributed to Sheykh Adi see Frank 1911: 29f, 108-27 and below, p. 48f.

[27] Layard 1849: I. 306-7.
[28] Badger 1852: I. 112-13, 115, 125-6.
[29] Chwolsohn 1856: I. 292-9.
[30] Viz those concerning lettuce and cauliflower (Lescot 1938: 76-7, cf. below, p. 149).
[31] See Lescot 1938: 50; Nikitine 1956: 227. On the Mandaean figure see Drower 1962: 94.
[32] Chwolsohn 1856: I. 299. The latter assertion was largely based on a passing remark by Layard that the Yezidis "have no particular reverence for fire".
[33] A summary of the arguments of these two scholars was published by Nikitine (1956: 226-37), who rejected the arguments of Guidi and Lescot (on which see below), and accepted Marr's thesis of a local, non-Islamic origin of Yezidism.
[34] For an attempt to demonstrate that Yezidism had Assyrian origins see also Ainsworth 1861.
[35] Lidzbarski 1897: 598, n. 1.
[36] Joseph 1909: 250.
[37] Mingana 1916: 515f; Driver 1922b: 510.
[38] Furlani 1930: 23f; 1931-2: 116f.
[39] See Frank 1911: 7; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 142, n. 2.
[40] Notably in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17 (e.g. p. 243), and Anastase 1899.
[41] Siouffi 1885.
[42] Siouffi 1882.
[43] A summary was published in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 243f.
[44] In an Editorial Note, Siouffi 1882: 252. The literal wording of the phrase was "malgré ses lacunes et la puérilité de certains détails".
[45] Driver 1922a: 210.
[46] On the reasons for this, and on the earlier exemption of Yezidis from military service see Driver 1922a: 207; Guest 1987: 99-100, 117.
[47] E.G. Browne published an English translation of a summary of the text in Parry 1895: 372. Lidzbarski (1897) published the original text with a German translation. English versions of the entire text were published by Joseph (1909: 151, 244) and Driver (1922a: 208-10), a French one by Nau and Tfinkdji (1915-17: 168-71), and an Italian translation is found in Furlani 1930: 93-102.
[48] The Ar. term used to denote the Yezidi community is *dāsinī* (Syriac *dāsnāyē*). The name originally denoted a prominent Yezidi tribe, but came to be used for the sect generally.
[49] Lit. "from the beginning to the end of of the month of April," etc. It is obviously unlikely that pilgrims were meant to stay for a month.
[50] Statements to the same effect end each clause of the document, and will not be repeated here.
[51] Ar.: *ṭā'ifa*.
[52] On the 'Brother of the Hereafter' see below, p. 136.
[53] Viz from the Devil. The omission of the rest of the formula is probably deliberate.
[54] Text: "and".
[55] So already Nau and Tfinkdji (1915-17: 170) and Furlani (1930: 99 with n. 4) for Ar. *aqall al-mudda*. *Pace* Lidzbarski (1897: 601) and Driver (1922a: 209).
[56] This information is not confirmed by other sources or by current practice. Possibly the term "Sister of the Hereafter" is used loosely here for the wife of the 'Brother'.
[57] Similar prohibitions are found in the *Meshef Resh*, see Frayha 1946: 25, and Guest 1987: 203-4.
[58] Lit. "the flesh of the fish" (*laḥm al-samak*), *pace* Driver 1922a: 210 ("such things as meat, fish...").
[59] I.e., *hibiscus esculentus*, see Lidzbarski 1897: 603, n. 2.
[60] On Isma'īl Beg see extensively Guest 1987: 160f.
[61] Guest 1987: 160, 161.
[62] A German translation was published by Dirr 1917-18, and an Italian one by Furlani (1930:

109-17). The version published here is based on these.
[63] Furlani (1930: 109, n. 4) plausibly explained "*gyli*" as a corruption of *jilwe*.
[64] Dirr: Husen; Furlani: Ḥuseyn.
[65] I.e., Ḥesen Meman, Pîr Afat and Omer Khale, on whom see below, p. 111.
[66] This is strange, since Yezidis normally regard Wednesdays and Fridays as holy. It is interesting, however, to note that in the *Meshef Resh* Sunday, rather than Wednesday, is said to have been the first day, see Kreyenbroek 1992: 72, n. 51.
[67] In modern Iraqi parlance such a functionary would be called *mijêwir*, see Silêman 1985: 51f, and below, p. 135. The *Qewls* which may be recited on such occasions include T. 18, 19.
[68] In Dirr's article, the text is followed by a treatise on the Yezidi festivals, by the same author. On this text see below, Ch. 6 with n. 103.
[69] See further below, esp. Ch. 6. Lescot's view (Lescot 1938: 5) that, "being intended to mollify the authorities, this supplication contains exaggerations which make it lose all value as documentary evidence", seems too severe.
[70] A later work of the same author, *al-Yazīdiyya qadīman wa ḥadīthan*, Beyrouth 1934, is unfortunately not available to me.
[71] Siouffi 1880. See also Guest 1987: 122.
[72] Written *Jalaou* in Siouffi 1880: 81.
[73] Siouffi 1880: 81.
[74] For an exhaustive account of the acquisition and publication of these texts see Guest 1987: 141-58.
[75] The Syriac text of the most interesting part of this work, with an Italian translation, was published by Giamil (1900); Nau and Tfinkdji (1915-17: 253f) give an elaborate French summary of the Syriac text.
[76] So Guest 1987: 147, without further reference or comment.
[77] Edmonds 1967: 88.
[78] See Edmonds 1967: 50.
[79] Guest 1987: 145.
[80] See Joseph 1909; Ebied and Young 1972.
[81] See Chabot 1896.
[82] See Guest 1987: 142f.
[83] Guest 1987: 151.
[84] 1987: 147.
[85] [Andrus] 1891.
[86] All quotations were mistakenly attributed to the *Jilwe*.
[87] In Parry 1895: 374-80.
[88] Joseph 1909.
[89] For a full account of Père Anastase's collaboration with a Yezidi apostate who claimed to have acted both as servant and librarian to an important religious leader, and whom the Christian priest induced to reveal many secrets of his previous faith, including the whereabouts of these "original texts", see Anastase 1911 and Guest 1987: 148f. Anastase had published much of the information he had received from this man in his articles of 1899.
[90] O. Mann, *Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1906. See Edmonds 1967: 88.
[91] Mingana 1916.
[92] Mingana was, of course, thinking exclusively in terms of a written tradition.
[93] See, e.g., Guest 1987: 201. It is true, on the other hand, that an introductory passage of the *Jilwe* found in some versions states that Melek Tawus taught "first by oral tradition and secondly by this book *Jilwe*" (Guest 1987: 200). Other versions, however, do not contain this initial passage (cf. Frayha 1946: 23), which suggests that it may be a late addition; in any case, as the text was undoubtedly held to contain the teachings of Sheykh Adi which had once been laid down in a book (see below), this statement can hardly be regarded as proof of a continued scriptural tradition.

[94] Edmonds 1967: 88.
[95] See Lescot 1938: 120.
[96] See Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992: 72.
[97] One of the modern leaders of the community, the Sheykh el-Wezîr, told the present writer at Lalish in September 1992: "Our *Qewls* are like our holy books; they are the words of God. Formerly we had books and many shrines, but the Muslims came and destroyed them. Still, the *Qewls* are in our hearts."
[98] Furlani 1930, *passim*, and 1931-2: 123f.
[99] Furlani 1931-2: 130-1
[100] Such as Layard 1849: I. 305-6. Cf. also Badger's reference (Badger 1852: 115, cf. above) to the Yezidis' "occasional pretensions to possess such [Scriptures]". Moreover, in March 1992 Pîr Khidr Silêman informed me that a sacred book, called *Meshûra Khetîb Pisê Kurrê Pîr Butar*, is still kept "in a village in the Sheykhan"; it is solemnly unwrapped once a year and kissed by believers. Pîr Khidr said that he had visited the village in question but was not allowed to examine the text, as it was believed that anyone who saw it would go blind. Pîr Khidr believes that a second *Meshûr* exists in another village in the same area. A manuscript published by Lescot mentions a *Kitāb al-Ḥabashī* ("Book of the Ethiopian") together with the titles of the other Yezidi sacred texts (Lescot 1938: 226, 230); texts purporting to be extracts from this work were published by Frayha (1946: 37f). I heard the *Kitāb al-Ḥabashī* referred to by Yezidis as one of their sacred books in 1992.
[101] First cited by al-'Azzawi 1935: 84, and quoted in Lescot 1938: 121-2.
[102] Empson 1928: 153, n.1.
[103] A conversation quoted by Siouffi (1880: 81) likewise suggests that the Baba Sheykh of the time attributed the *Meshef Resh* to Sheykh Adi. On the other hand Sheykh Adi is widely believed to have dictated the *Jilwe* to Fekhr el-Dîn, while the *Meshef* is often attributed to Sheykh Hesen, see Empson 1928: 146, 149 and Guest 1987: 199. Edmonds (1967: 49), however, states that the *Jilwe* is associated with Hesen, and the *Meshef Resh* with Sheykh Shems.
[104] See Furlani 1930: 109, n. 4.
[105] Written communication, 1 November 1992. Professor Blau kindly sent me a copy of the recording, which is kept in the Archive of the Society for Iranian Oral Studies (SIOS), London.
[106] Including an account of the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem by the Yezidis who, although poor and few in number, were commanded by God to do this work, and received his help. A somewhat similar story is found in Edmonds 1967: 46f.
[107] See Mingana 1916: 523.
[108] Cf. Giamil 1900: 13-15 (in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 254f), and paragraphs 28-33 of Bittner's edition of the *Meshef Resh* (Bittner 1913; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 162; see also Kreyenbroek 1992: 73).
[109] Like Ishak's text, the former version mentions six angels, albeit perfunctorily (see Kreyenbroek 1992: 73), whereas the latter stops at the fifth (see Guest 1987: 204).
[110] Short, apparently fixed texts were used more than once by the Sheykh el-Wezîr in October 1992 to explain or sum up the teachings of the faith.
[111] See below, esp. T. 1, 2.
[112] Cf. the references to Mulla Haydar, above.
[113] The divinity in question speaks in the first person and is not explicitly identified. Note, however, the words "honour my symbol and image" (Guest 1987: 202), which presumably refer to the images of Melek Tawus. *Pace* Frank (1911: 40), who thought that the speaker was Sheykh Adi.
[114] Mingana's detailed philological arguments could at best be used to support his theory of Shamir's authorship of the texts. Even if the Arabic version of these showed influences of Syriac, they might still be old.
[115] See further below, Ch. 2.
[116] See Guidi 1932a: 296f, and particularly 297-8. Strangely, Guidi appears to regard Manichaeism as the "Iranian faith" most influential in shaping the Yezidi tradition. As a typical instance

of this, he cites such unlikely practices as the "extinguishing of the light" (viz. in order to have orgies), and "making lawful that which is forbidden" as typical of both faiths.

[117] See Guidi 1932b: 286.

[118] E.g. Guidi (1932b: 399) praises the value of Ibn Ṭaymiyya's work as evidence for the history of Yezidism, saying: "Certainly for the study of the history of these sects, concerning which people speak so easily of syncretisms... of relics of paganism, one should listen above all to one who has not only known them, but has taken a very active part in the struggle against them." He fails to take into account the possibility that Ibn Ṭaymiyya, bringing his own categories of thought to bear upon a system of beliefs for which they may not have been appropriate, and to which he was in any case hostile, may have severely misrepresented the realities of Yezidism.

[119] Lescot 1938: 19.

[120] Lescot 1938: 4.

[121] *Al-Yazīdiyya qadīman wa ḥadīthan*, Beyrouth 1934.

[122] Lescot 1938: 6-7.

[123] Lit. "d'une incroyable lourdeur d'esprit".

[124] Lescot 1938: 4.

[125] There are some indications that the Nestorian congregation of Jebel Sinjar accepted Yezidism in the seventeenth century (see Anastase 1899: 36; Guest 1987: 50); it is unlikely, however, that questions of individual faith played an important role even in this exceptional case.

[126] Newly acquired religious convictions might of course lead to the conversion of Yezidis to other faiths, but there is no evidence that this possibility ever preoccupied the community to any considerable extent. The reasons sometimes given for keeping children away from school, viz. that schools are run by Muslims who might try to convert the young Yezidis, probably represent an attempt to rationalise an ingrained attitude.

[127] On these groups see further below, Ch. 5.

[128] On the emergence of the Feqîrs as a hereditary class see Lescot 1938: 95-7, and below, Ch. 5.

[129] See in particular the beliefs concerning the fate of the soul after death, Ch. 6.

[130] See Edmonds 1967: 6.

[131] Similar concepts play an important role in the Ahl-e Haqq tradition, which shares many characteristics with Yezidism, see below, p. 52f.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EARLY HISTORY: FACTUAL AND LEGENDARY ACCOUNTS

Accounts of the time of Sheykh Adi and his immediate successors form an integral part of what may be called the sacred history of Yezidism. For a better understanding of these, however, it is necessary first to examine what is known from other sources about the factual history of the sect during this period.

FACTUAL HISTORY

It is customary to regard the arrival of the Sufi Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir as the first of a chain of events which eventually resulted in the emergence of Yezidism. This accords with the views of most Yezidis and seems generally plausible, in spite of the fact that Sheykh 'Adī would probably have disapproved of the later stages in the development of Yezidism, and that several elements of that faith were already present in the area before his advent. These did not only include observances and beliefs which can be traced back to an ancient Iranian faith (on which see below, Ch. 3), but also the veneration of Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya (d. 683). Al-Sam'ānī, who died in 1167 CE,[1] and was thus a contemporary of Sheykh 'Adī, wrote in his *Kitāb al-Ansāb*:[2]

> In Iraq, in the Jebel Ḥulwān[3] and in the surrounding areas I have encountered many Yazīdīs.[4] They lead an ascetic life in the villages of those mountains, and take *ḥāl*.[5] They rarely associate with other people.They believe in the Imamate

> of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya and that he was righteous. I saw a group of them also in the Mosque of al-Marj... There is another group, a Khārijite one, also called *al-Yazīdiyya*.[6]

In fact there is detailed evidence to show that, four centuries after the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, a religious movement was prominent in the Kurdish mountains which taught an excessive worship for that dynasty,[7] not least for Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya—a figure not generally admired by Sunni Muslims and execrated by Shi'ites, who hold him responsible for the martyrdom of al-Ḥussayn in 680. Some descendants of the Umayyad dynasty, moreover, had established themselves there as Sufi Sheykhs.[8] At the time of Sheykh 'Adī's arrival, Sufi masters residing in the Kurdish mountains included 'Uqayl al-Mambijī and Abū 'l-Wafā al-Ḥulwānī.[9]

For the sake of presenting a balanced picture of the religious conditions which obtained in Kurdistan at the time of the beginnings of Yezidism, mention must also be made of the existence of apparently large groups of tribal Kurds who still followed their traditional, pre-Islamic faith some time after the death of Sheykh 'Adī. Barhebraeus (d. 1286), a Christian Primate, gives the following description of these Kurds and their beliefs:[10]

> In the year 602 of the Arabs [1205-6 C.E.], the race of those Kurds who live in the mountains of Maddaï [near Ḥulwān], and who are called Tayrāhids (*tyr'hy'*), came down from the mountains and caused much destruction in those lands [near Mosul]. The Persian troups united against them and killed many of them. They did not follow Islam but persisted in their original idolatry and the religion of the Magi (*mgwšwt'*).[11] Moreover, there was mortal enmity between them and the Muslims.

It was, then, to an area where both admirers of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya and followers of a pre-Islamic cult were prominent that the mystic 'Adī b. Musāfir, a Muslim whose orthodoxy has never been called in question,[12] came some time before the year 1111.[13]

Sheykh 'Adî b. Musāfir

Sheykh 'Adī, a descendant of the Umayyad caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (d. 685),[14] was born between 1073 and 1078[15] in the village of Bayt Fār in the Beka'a Valley in the Lebanon. He spent part of his young manhood in Baghdad, where he studied with the Sufi master Ḥammād al-Dabbās, who was also the teacher of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.[16] There he probably also knew such eminent figures as Abū

Najīb 'Abd al-Qādir al-Suhrawardī, and the brothers Abū Ḥamīd and Aḥmad Ghazālī.[17] It seems that he moved to the Hakkari mountains in the early years of the twelfth century.[18] There he continued his Sufi training under 'Uqayl al-Mambijī, Abū 'l-Wafā al-Ḥulwānī and others.[19] He soon gained a reputation as a mystic. The statement in the *Bahjat al-Asrār*,[20] that Sheykh 'Adī and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī made the pilgrimage to Mecca together in 1116, is generally regarded as plausible.[21] Apart from that journey, however, Kurdistan remained the centre of the Sheykh's activities, although he may occasionally have come down to the plains in the south to preach.[22] He died in the Hakkari mountains at an advanced age in 1160 or 1162.[23]

All sources are agreed that Sheykh 'Adī found a warm welcome in the Kurdish mountains, where the Kurds were in any case inclined to look favourably upon a descendant of the Umayyad dynasty. He soon had a large following among both Kurds and non-Kurds.[24] The historian Ibn al-Athīr (d.1234) says in his *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*:[25] "[in 557 H.Q.], in the month Muḥarram, died Sheykh 'Adī the ascetic, who lived in the Hakkari area ... People from cultivated areas and from the mountains of that area followed him; they obeyed him and had a good opinion of him, and he was very famous." Ibn Khalliqān (d. 1282) gives a short account of Sheykh 'Adī's life in his *Kitāb Wafāyāt al-A'yān:wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, which begins as follows: [26]

> Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir, called al-Hakkārī after his dwelling place, the servant (of God), the pious, the famous, after whom the 'Adawiyya Order is called. His fame penetrated into the remotest countries and many people followed him. Their faith in him, while laudable in itself, exceeded all limits, so that they have even made him into their *qibla*, to which they turn during prayer, and into their 'capital' (*dhakhīra*) for the hereafter, in which they put their trust.

Sheykh 'Adī's succession

Such, then, were the beginnings of the 'Adawiyya, a Sufi Order with followers in many parts of the Middle East,[27] one of whose branches was to lose much of its Islamic character and become the precursor of the Yezidi sect. Ibn Khalliqān's reference to the excessive worship of Sheykh 'Adī may be no more than a projection into the past of a contemporary state of affairs, but it seems likely nevertheless that from its inception the 'Adawiyya had many of the features of the type of Sufi Order that began to emerge around this time. As Trimingham[28] has

shown, these Orders were characterised by a strong sense of veneration for the persons of their founder and subsequent leaders, who were believed to possess special powers (*baraka*). In most places hereditary succession to the leadership was a characteristic of Sufi groups of this type, as was the veneration of the Founder's tomb. Shrines which were built around these tombs tended to become the focus of the spiritual and social life of the Orders. All of this is of course true of Yezidism as it developed later. We can only speculate about the nature of the community at the time of Sheykh Adi, but subsequent events make it seem very likely that his disciples felt a great veneration for the man as well as for his teaching. Moreover, there is the fact that Sheykh 'Adī, who died childless, was succeeded by a relative, his nephew Ṣakhr Abū 'l-Barakāt. Ṣakhr was born at Bayt Fār but migrated to Kurdistan in order to join his uncle.[29] According to the *Bahjat al-Asrār*,[30]

> He took up his abode with his uncle, whose disciples received him with great respect. When the saint died, all turned towards Ṣakhr Abū 'l-Barakāt; they chose him as leader and recognised his succession to Sheykh 'Adī, in accordance with his wishes. The Sheykhs of the Mountain said that the mystery of sainthood (*sirr al-wilāya*) had passed to him after his uncle's death.

This account could of course be dismissed as a later fabrication, but the fact remains that a relative of Sheykh 'Adī took the trouble of moving to a distant land, a mountainous and isolated country where the locals spoke an alien tongue, apparently for the sole purpose of being with his uncle.[31] One cannot help suspecting that there is some truth in the account of the *Bahjat al-Asrār*, and that Ṣakhr's status as a relative of the Sheykh could at least be expected to be an asset.

'Adī b. Abī 'l-Barakāt

Little else is known about Ṣakhr Abū 'l-Barakāt than that he was a pious Muslim, opposed to innovations and excesses, whose leadership kept the Order on the right path.[32] More has been written about his son and successor, 'Adī b. Abī 'l-Barakāt (hereafter Adi II). This figure is widely believed to have seized the Christian monastery of Yuḥanan and Isho' Sabran, which many scholars identify with the sanctuary of Sheykh Adi at Lalish.[33] It is further claimed that some of the Christian monks survived the attack on their monastery and demanded justice from the Mongol Emperor, who had Adi II executed in 1221. Adi II, according to this

account of events, pleaded in vain that he was innocent of all but inability to control the Tayrāhid Kurds, whom he blamed for the event.

All of this information in fact derives from a single source, an account allegedly written in 1452 by the Nestorian monk Ramisho', and re-copied in 1588 and 1880.[34] This source actually attributes the capture of the monastery to 'Adī b. Musāfir, but further internal evidence implies that it must have taken place in 1221,[35] which led most scholars to attribute the deed to Adi II. The value of this source is, however, doubtful. Its account of the event clearly derives from a passage in the work of Barhebraeus (d. 1286), which describes the capture of another Christian monastery by a man called Michael which took place in 1256-7, i.e., during the author's life-time.[36] Ramisho', on the other hand, is said to have lived two centuries later. Another part of the source has been shown to depend on the nineteenth century work of Ishak of Bartella,[37] and it contains more strange anachronisms.[38] It is, therefore, widely regarded as a forgery.[39] Other early sources indicate that it was Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir who established the centre of his Order at Lalish.[40] Since the authors may have been unaware that there were two Yezidi leaders called 'Adī, the evidence of these works can hardly be regarded as conclusive. However, in view of the above, and of the absence of any trace of evidence to suggest that the Sheykh's remains were moved to Lalish at a later date, the possibility that it was Sheykh 'Adī himself who established Lalish as the centre of his Order must be seriously entertained.[41]

al-Ḥasan b. 'Adī

More accurate information is available about the son and successor of Adi II. According to al-Kutubī,[42] his full name was al-Ḥasan b.'Adī b. Abī 'l-Barakāt b. Ṣakhr b. Musāfir Shams al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad, and he came to be identified in the Yezidi tradition with the renowned al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.[43] According to most sources he was executed in 1254.[44] The reason for this execution, according to al-Kutubī, was that his large following of Kurds posed a threat to the Zangid Atabeg of Mosul, Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu'.[45] Badr al-Dīn further ordered the execution of two hundred members of the sect and, it seems, had Sheykh Adi's bones disinterred and burned.[46]

An anonymous Arabic Chronicle[47] also describes this conflict, calling Sheykh Ḥasan's followers "'Adawi Kurds" (*Akrād 'Adawiyya*). Most sources, in fact,

bear witness to the increased influence of the local Kurdish element under Ḥasan's leadership. Al-Kutubī (d. 1363)[48] states: "There are people amongst the Kurds even now who firmly believe that Sheykh Ḥasan will undoubtedly return. They have collected gifts for the time when they expect him to return and they are absolutely convinced that the Sheykh has not died." Al-Kutubī[49] further recounts that the veneration of the 'Adawis for the Sheykh went so far that, when the sermon of an itinerant preacher had made Sheykh Ḥasan cry and faint, his Kurdish followers promptly killed the man for making their leader lose his dignity. When he regained consciousness, the Sheykh did not dare to protest for fear of losing his status in the community.[50] Ibn Ṭaymiyya, a puritan, Hanbalite theologian who "lifted his voice high against innovation, saint-worship, vows and pilgrimage to shrines",[51] and who composed an entire treatise to expose such unorthodox tendencies among the 'Adawiyya,[52] gives the following report of the excesses which found their way into that sect under Sheykh Ḥasan's leadership:[53]

> They also reported that Ḥasan b. 'Adī was a saint, for such and such a reason... At the time of Sheykh Ḥasan, they added to this [viz. to their belief in Yazīd] many further errors, in poetry and prose. They devoted to Sheykh Adi and to Yazīd an excessive veneration, incompatible with the doctrine of the great Sheykh 'Adī. In fact the teaching of the latter was orthodox and did not admit any of these innovations.

In another Arabic source[54] it is said that Sheykh Ḥasan went into seclusion for a number of years and wrote a work called *Kitāb al-Jilwa li-Arbāb al-Khalwa*. This work can hardly be identical with the *Jilwe* of the later Yezidi tradition, but the title of the latter work undoubtedly derives from it. Generations of Yezidis were probably taught that their sacred text represented the writing of one of the early Leaders of the faith.[55] Sheykh Ḥasan is also the presumed author of an extant treatise on Sufi practice. This work contains a number of traditions about Sheykh 'Adī, suggesting that he taught the need for complete dependence on the part of the disciple and absolute authority on that of the Master.[56] Sheykh 'Adī, it seems, told a group of followers: "When I am pleased with you, then God is pleased with you." He held that the Sheykh should know the minutest details of the life of his *murīd* who, in turn, should be in the hands of the Master like a corpse in the hands of the one who washes it. The following tradition, which seems significant in the light of the later development of Yezidism, is quoted with apparent approbation by

Sheykh Ḥasan:[57]

> It has been transmitted by one of the Companions of our Sheykh, whose name was Taraḥḥum, that the Sheykh said to him one day, "O Taraḥḥum, when Munkar and Nakīr will be sent into your grave and ask you about your Lord, what will you answer them?" He answered, "I shall tell them, 'Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir will tell you who my Lord is.'"

In practice, such reliance on the authority of the Master and his powers of intercession may effectively have absolved believers of the need to be overly scrupulous about adopting ideas of doubtful orthodoxy (see further below, Ch. 3).

The emergence of syncretist elements

In view of what went before, there can be little doubt that ideas, practices and attitudes deriving from the culture of the local Kurds gained a degree of acceptance among those members of the 'Adawiyya who resided at Lalish. Such a re-emergence of older traditions as part of an Islamic cult is sometimes regarded as the most enigmatic aspect of the history of Yezidism. There are several factors, however, which help to explain this development. These include the presence in the area of significant numbers of Kurdish adherents of an older faith; the fact that the Kurdish element predominated in the community at Lalish,[58] while its leaders had lived there for generations; the remoteness and isolation of the Lalish valley, which must have led to a constant exposure of the 'Adawis to one another's views while isolating the community from the influence of centres of orthodox Islamic teaching; and the tendency of Sufi Orders to emphasise the experiential, emotional side of religion rather than questions of dogma. Given these factors, there appears to be nothing strange in the notion that elements of local culture, however suspect they may initially have seemed, were felt to be acceptable relatively soon.

Sheykh Ḥasan's successors

As Mongol interference became the determining factor in the affairs of the region, Sheykh Ḥasan's successors were destined to be remembered chiefly as military and political, rather than spiritual, leaders. Sheykh Ḥasan's son Sharaf al-Dīn, who probably succeeded his father in 1254, allied himself with the Seljuqid prince 'Izz al-Dīn against the Mongols and was killed in battle in 1257-8.[59] His son Zayn al-Dīn relinquished his right of succession to Sheykh Ḥasan's brother Fakhr al-Dīn,[60]

who had married a Mongol woman and was apparently on good terms with the Mongols for a number of years. Then, in 1275, he had to face a rebellion by his brother Shams al-Dīn, whom he forced to flee to Syria. For unknown reasons, however, Fakhr himself took flight to Egypt a year later. One of the brothers[61] returned shortly afterwards to apologise, but was promptly executed. Nothing is known about subsequent leaders of the 'Adawi community at Lalish.

Sharaf al-Dīn's son Zayn al-Dīn, whose name is occasionally mentioned in the Yezidi tradition,[62] first established himself in Damascus, where support from the 'Adawiyya Order enabled him to live "the life of a king".[63] This continued when he settled in his ancestral Beka'a Valley some years later. He eventually repented of this flamboyant lifestyle and went to Cairo, where he established a Sufi centre and where he died in 1297.[64] His son 'Izz al-Dīn, known as "the Kurd",[65] had a devoted following of Kurds apparently large enough to cause serious concern to the Mameluke ruler al-Nāṣir (d. 1340). He was arrested in 1330-1,[66] on suspicion of plotting a rebellion, and died in prison.[67]

It seems that the faith that was to become Yezidism gained a following among the Kurdish tribes with remarkable rapidity.[68] One reason for its appeal may of course have been the presence of traditional, local elements in what was presumably still perceived as an Islamic sect. An incident described by al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442) in his *al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifa Duwal al-Mulūk*,[69] illustrates the widening rift between the group at Lalish and the followers of orthodox Islam, which ultimately led to the exclusion of Yezidism from the Islamic *umma*:

> In that year [1415 CE], was burned down the grave of Sheykh Adi in the Hakkārī mountains, which belong to the lands of the Kurds. This Sheykh Adi is 'Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī, with *tashdīd* of the *kāf*. He joined a number of Sufi Sheykhs, and then settled in the mountainous country of the Kurdish Hakkari tribe which is one of the dependencies of Mosul. There he built himself a settlement. Everyone in these areas, whoever lived there, was well disposed towards him. And they firmly believed in his excellence and exceeded all limits in their faith, until he died in 555 or, as is also said, in 557. And he was buried in his settlement. His disciples, known by the name of *'Adawiyya*, remained near his tomb—their numbers were considerable—and made it their *qibla*, towards which they turned when praying, and their 'capital' for the hereafter, in which they put their trust. His tomb became one of the most visited places and most popular shrines, in accordance with the multitude of his disciples and his fame in all regions. His disciples at his settlement by his tomb kept his customs and followed his traditions, while the people showed to them what they had

shown the Sheykh during his lifetime, namely exceptional trust and extreme veneration. In the course of time their excesses increased to such an extent that they finally claimed that it was Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir who granted them sustenance, and that they often said, "We are not content with food that does not come from Sheykh Adi." Also, according to them the Sheykh is seated with God, Most High, and eating bread and onions with Him. They neglected the prayers prescribed for day and night, saying, "Sheykh Adi prays in our place." They declared forbidden sexual intercourse licit.

Sheykh Adi had a servant by the name of Ḥasan al-Bawwāb.[70] Now they maintain that Sheykh Adi, when his end was near, ordered this Ḥasan to place his back against his [Adi's] back. When he had done so, Sheykh Adi said to him, "My progeny has passed into your loins." Now when Sheykh Adi died without issue, it was the descendants of Sheykh Ḥasan al-Bawwāb whom the 'Adawiyya firmly believed to be the progeny of Sheykh Adi. They spent all their zeal worshipping them, so that they even brought their daughters to any descendant of Sheykh Ḥasan who came to them. That person then remained alone with them and did what he wished. The father and mother believed that this was a bond of kinship by which one became related to God, Most High.

Now when this behaviour caused disgust, one of the theologians of Persia who belonged to the school of al-Shāfi'ī, God be merciful to him, and was known by the name of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Izz al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Ḥulwānī, was willing to summon (people) to fight them. Amīr 'Izz al-Dīn al-Bokhtī, the lord of Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, and Amīr Tawakkul, the lord of the Shērānīs, hearkened to him. And they collected against them a large number of the Sindiyya Kurds. The lord of Ḥiṣn Kayfā supported them with soldiers, and Amīr Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Jurdhaqīlī joined them. They marched against the Hakkārī mountains, an enormous multitude, and killed large numbers of the followers of Sheykh Adi, who were known among the Kurds at that time as *al-Ṣuḥbatiyya*,[71] and took some of them prisoner. Then they came to the village of Shērālīq; this is the village where the tomb of Sheykh Adi was located. They rased the structure which was erected over it to the ground, ransacked the grave and took out the bones. These they burned in the presence of those of the *Ṣuḥbatiyya* whom they had taken prisoner, saying to them, "See how we burn the one of whom you claim all that you claim, and who is yet incapable of stopping us." After this they returned with rich spoils. The *Ṣuḥbatiyya*, however, closed their ranks after this and rebuilt the structure; and they stayed there in accordance with their custom. However, they became the enemies of any one who bore the title of *faqīh*, and killed them whenever they could.

This was the first of the long succession of persecutions of Yezidis by Muslims which was to characterise the history of the group in centuries to come, undoubtedly shaping the community's outlook to a significant extent.[72] The present

work, intended to describe Yezidism as a religious movement, is concerned with such tragic events only insofar as they left traces in the religious tradition of the group. It is one of the remarkable features of the indigenous tradition that the period between the the days of Sharaf al-Dīn, Zayn al-Dīn[73] and 'Izz al-Dīn on the one hand, and the massacre of Yezidis by the Bey of Rowanduz in 1832[74] on the other, appears to have left hardly any trace there.

LEGENDARY HISTORY

It has been shown that such a state of affairs is typical of accounts of history shaped by oral transmission.[75] In fact many of the characteristics of the myths and legends told by the Yezidis about the origin of their community and its early history, can be explained in the light of the oral character of the tradition. Mention has already been made (Ch. 1) of the role of concepts such as reincarnation,[76] the manifestation of divinities in human form, and the blurred dividing line between human and supernatural beings, in shaping the legendary history of Yezidism. As Edmonds put it:[77]

> For people who believe in the transmigration of souls what appears to us to be the most appalling inconsistencies and anachronisms present no difficulty whatever: it is as silly to say that Shaykh X and Shaykh Y whose appearance on earth seems to have been separated by one or more centuries, or even the archangel Gabriel and Shaykh Sajādin, cannot be 'the same' as to try to make out that Mr Jones who was seen last night in tails... cannot be the same as Mr Jones who was seen the day before in a lounge suit...

Such notions must have made it relatively easy to make Yezidi sacred history follow a preconceived pattern. In fact, as will be shown below (Ch. 3), myths which have their origin in remote antiquity have retained their essential structure in the Yezidi tradition, but the roles once played by Indo-Iranian divinities have come to be attributed to figures who were once the (human) leaders of the community.

It is well known that, in oral literature, it is impossible to identify a single 'original' or 'true' version of an account. In the Yezidi tradition, several different and at times contradictory versions exist of many aspects of the early history of the community. Moreover, while many modern Yezidis probably believe the account of Sheykh Adi's advent at Lalish and subsequent events to be true, the stories about Shehîd b. Jerr, the miraculous birth of Yezîd, and similar tales are now widely felt

to be no more than legends. A Yezidi explanation of the discrepancies between the various accounts of the same topic runs as follows:[78]

> The understanding of the Christians is obscured by their many books; and even so, the books only tell them what has taken place after the last Adam.[79] As for us, our books are our hearts [i.e., our memories]. As regards the different opinions that exist among us—viz. if one (man) says that the Fire of Hell is extinguished and another says it is not; or if one says that the dead will be resurrected and another says not—these are not errors or contradictions which can be held against our Yezidi religion, for those who hold different opinions have not all lived at the same time, but at different epochs. Consequently each says what God has shown him in the early times, (i.e., the period) since before the last Adam until now.

According to the tradition, the origin of the Yezidi people is not like that of others. They are descended from Adam's son Shehîd b. Jerr ("Witness, son of the Jar").[80] Adam, irritated by Eve's claims that all their children belonged to her, asserted that it was the father who gives life to his progeny. In order to prove this he challenged Eve to a contest. Both deposited their seed in separate jars. After nine months, Eve's jar contained only worms and insects, but Adam's brought forth Shehîd. The latter subsequently married a houri from Paradise, and the Yezidis are descended from this union.[81] Adam, who was a true believer, transmitted his religion to Shehîd, who passed it on to his offspring. The faith was revitalised, it seems, by Yezîd (or Êzîd), whose birth was again unusual. He was the son of Mu'āwiya, whose clan—the Umayyads—had become subordinate to that of the Prophet Muḥammad, and who was forced to perform menial services for him. Once, while shaving his master, he caused blood to flow. The Prophet told him that, as a result, Mu'āwiya's descendants would fight the people of the Prophet and overcome them. Mu'āwiya then vowed never to marry. This ran counter to God's Will, however, and He sent Mu'āwiya a malady from which he could only be cured if he married. Mu'āwiya then wed an eighty-year-old virgin, Mahūsa. She, however, became like a young woman after the wedding night and gave birth to Êzîd.[82] Some believe that the latter is the divinity who is currently ruling over the world.[83] Other accounts state that he abandoned his father's faith, Islam, and embraced the religion of Shehîd, which he promoted and which spread throughout Syria, until the time of Sheykh Adi.[84]

Sheykh Adi one day received a divine revelation, telling him to go from Syria to

the Christian monastery of Ḥenna and Mar Ḥenna. The monks were to be expelled since the monastery was intended for Adi. However, they initially refused to leave their dwelling, and Sheykh Adi repaired to a nearby cavern. Ḥenna and Mar Ḥenna, intending to kill Sheykh Adi, assumed the shape of serpents and went to find him.[85] Sheykh Adi, however, was aware of this and in turn adopted one of his earlier forms, that of the monks' former master.[86] The two recognised him and worshipped him on the spot. Reassuming their human forms, they repented and gave up their claims to the monastery. In exchange, Sheykh Adi gave them his Cavern and lent its dust the miraculous power to heal diseases of the mouth, thus affording the monks a livelihood in the form of alms from pilgrims.[87]

At Lalish, Sheykh Adi encountered the sons of a figure called Êzdîna Mîr, viz. Sheykh Shems el-Dîn,[88] Sheykh Fekhr el-Dîn, the sons of one wife, and Sheykh Sejadîn and Sheykh Naṣir el-Dîn, Êzdîna Mîr's sons by another wife. They were later joined by Sheykh Hesen.[89] As we saw earlier, Sheykh Hesen is widely believed to be identical with the seventh-century mystic al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. He is thus thought to be unrelated to Êzdîna Mîr and his family. According to Edmonds,[90] the Yezidi Heptad of Archangels—the *Heft Sirr* or "Seven Mysteries"—consists of Sheykh Adi, Melek Tawus, and these five figures. Instead of Sheykh Adi, the *Meshef Resh* mentions Ebû Bekr,[91] who is more often said to have been one of Sheykh Adi's four brothers, the others being 'Ebd al-Qadir,[92] Sheykh Isma'îl, and Sheykh 'Ebd el-'Ezîz.[93] The *Meshef Resh* further identifies the members of this Heptad with the names of Archangels known from the Muslim tradition, such as Jibra'îl and 'Ezra'îl.[94]

CONCLUSION

The Yezidi tradition has thus not only transformed a number of Sheykh Adi's successors into his contemporaries,[95] it also implies the existence of a Heptad, whose members were at the same time historical human figures and manifestations of eternal divine beings who are likewise known to other religions. The division of these mythical figures into three groups, moreover, helps to explain the existence of the separate branches of Yezidi Sheykhs (see also below, Ch. 5): the Shemsanis claim descent from the sons of Êzdîna Mîr, the Adanis from Sheykh Hesen, and the Qatanis from Sheykh Adi's brothers.[96] Furthermore, the concept of a Heptad of divine or angelic beings, who are in charge of this world under God, can be traced

to an ancient Iranian or Indo-Iranian tradition (see below, Ch. 3). The historical facts of the early history of Yezidism have thus been manipulated in such a way as to conform to a preconceived structure. Such factors as the belief in reincarnation, and in the manifestation of divine beings in human form, clearly played an important role in facilitating this process. Perhaps the most striking thing about the Yezidi account of its legendary history, however, is that it is supremely meaningful to members of the community—offering an explanation of the role of the early figures of the faith, and of the divisions of the clans of Sheykhs, while at the same time preserving the fundamental elements of an ancient myth—and shaped in such a way that it can be remembered relatively easily. Such features have been shown to be typical of the development of orally transmitted accounts.[97] The Yezidi version of the early history of the faith, when compared with what is known about the objective facts, can thus be regarded as an apt illustration of the genesis and function of legendary history in a non-literate society.

Notes

[1] Unless otherwise stated, all dates given here are those of the Common Era.
[2] al-Sam'ānī 1912: 600, quoted by Frayha (1946: 20) and partially by Lescot (1938: 21); the first part of the Arabic text is quoted by Guidi, with a detailed discussion of its implications (1932b: 381, 390).
[3] I.e., on the road from Baghdad to the Kurdish mountains (Guidi 1932b: 390).
[4] So Lescot, *loc. cit.* Frayha's translation seems implausible.
[5] *Celastrus edulis*, a plant consumed by some Sufis to lighten the burdens of fasting, see Lescot 1938: 21, n. 4.
[6] In Frayha's translation, the statement goes on to say, "They are the followers of Yazīd b. Unaysa." In the original text the word could at best be read *'nbsh*, but the interpretation seems plausible. The followers of Yazīd b. Unaysa are also mentioned by another contemporary of Sheykh 'Adī, al-Shahristānī (d. 1153), see Furlani 1932: 98f; Guidi 1932a: 283. Cf. Frank 1911: 103.
[7] See Guidi 1932a, *passim*.
[8] Lescot (1938: 21) names one Abū Ḥasan 'Alī, who died presumably in 1092 (Lescot gives his life-span as "409-84, 1018-29").
[9] See Lescot 1938: 32; Guest 1987: 16. The latter figure is probably the Abū 'l-Wafā who is referred to in the Yezidi tradition, see with references below, T. 16. 17.
[10] Quoted in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 188, n. 2.
[11] Nau and Tfinkdji translate "la religion de Zoroastre".
[12] See, among others, Frank's discussion of Sheykh 'Adī's prose works (Frank 1911: 10f), notably *I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunna wa 'l-Jamā'a*, and *Kitāb fīhi Dhikr Ādāb al-Nafs*. See also below, p. 46.
[13] The death in that year of Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī, who referred to Sheykh 'Adī in a letter as "*al-Hakkārī*", provides a *terminus ante quem*. See Frank 1911: 42-3, and Lescot 1938: 24, n. 2.
[14] See Lescot 1938: 22. Frank (1911: 84), quoting al-Shaṭṭanawfī's *Bahjat al-Asrār*, gives Sheykh Adi's full name as "Sharaf al-Dīn Abū 'l-Faḍā'il 'Adī b. Musāfir b. Ismā'īl b. Mūsā b. Marwān b. al-Ḥasan b. Marwān b. al-Ḥākim [*sic*] b. Marwān al-Umawī". On Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and his branch of the Umayyad dynasty see Hitti 1937: 193, 206. A Yezidi tradition claims that Sheykh Adi's mother was called "Settias" (so Ishak, quoted by Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 256), or "(Sitt) Yês" (Edmonds 1967: 31).
[15] See Lescot 1938: 22, and cf. Guest 1987: 16.
[16] See Lescot 1938: 23 with n. 2. 'Abd al-Qādir, whom the Qādiriyya Order later claimed as its founder, may be identical with the *al-Qādirī* who is mentioned in three of the *Qaṣīdas* attributed to Sheykh Adi (Frank 1911: 114, 120, 126), together with "Aḥmad b. al-Rifā'ī", i.e., the founder of a Sufi Order, and Abū 'l-Wafā, on whom see above. For al-Rifā'ī see also below, T. 16. 26f; his name was substituted for another in the first two *Qaṣīdas*, see Frank 1911: 114, 116.
[17] Lescot 1938: 22.
[18] Lescot 1938: 42 with n. 2.
[19] See Ibn Khalliqān in Frank 1911: 52.
[20] Cited by Frank (1911: 87), who refers to the Yezidi tradition that it was during this pilgrimage that Melek Tawus appeared to Sheykh Adi.
[21] Lescot 1938: 22, 24, n. 4; Guest 1987: 16.
[22] Frank 1911: 102.
[23] See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 144. The Arabic sources give 555 or 557 H.Q. as the year of his death (see al-Maqrīzī in Frank 1911: 88; Lescot 1938: 22). Guest (1987: 18): January 1162.
[24] Frank 1911: 104, cf. Lescot (1938: 24 with n. 3), who thinks that the Kurdish element may have predominated among his followers.
[25] Quoted by Frank 1911: 45-6. On Ibn al-Athīr see also Hitti 1937: 391-2.

[26] Quoted by Frank 1911: 51-2. On Ibn Khalliqān see Hitti 1937: 687.
[27] Notably Syria and Egypt, see Lescot 1938: 31.
[28] Trimingham 1971, esp. p. 9f.
[29] So the *Bahjat al-Asrār*, cited by Lescot 1938: 33.
[30] Quoted in Lescot 1938: 33.
[31] The reason usually given for Sheykh 'Adī's migration to Kurdistan, viz. his yearning for solitude, can hardly apply in the case of his nephew, who came to join what must already have been a sizeable community.
[32] See Guidi 1932b: 414 (who remarks that this implies that such "innovations and excesses" must have been known in the community at this time), and Lescot 1938: 33.
[33] On his capture of the monastery see Guidi 1932b: 423-4, Lescot 1938: 101-2; for the identification of the Yezidi shrine with the Christian monastery see Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 145, 185, and more guardedly Furlani 1932: 108-9 and Bois 1967: 89-100; the identification receives some support from the Yezidi tradition, which states that Sheykh Adi took over the monastery of Ḥenna and Mar Ḥenna (Siouffi 1882: 262; Edmonds 1967: 4). On the Shrine's origin as a Christian place of worship see already Badger 1853: 110; Furlani 1930: 50 with n. 1. In a letter to me dated 15 January 1993, Mr John Warren, an expert in Middle Eastern architecture, gives detailed reasons for his view that the Shrine of Sheykh Adi was originally a Christian monastery of pre-Yezidi origin.
[34] It was first published by Nau and Tfinkdji (1915-17: 172-200).
[35] Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 195.
[36] Barhebraeus died in 1286 (Frank 1911: 53).
[37] See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 148.
[38] See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 147-8. These authors did, however, believe in the value of the work.
[39] See Guest 1987: 217, n. 40.
[40] Al-Yāqūt (d. 1229): "Laylish [sic] is a village on the slope of the mountains.... There lived Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir, the Shāfi'ite, the Sheykh and Imām of the Kurds, and his son [sic]." See Frank 1911: 44, and cf. the passage from al-Maqrīzī on p. 34f.
[41] Lescot (1938: 24, but cf. 1938: 102) and Guest (1987: 16) assume that this was the case. An argument that might seem to lend some credibility to the account of "Ramisho'"is that the Cave and Cavern located under the Sanctuary may have had great religious significance for tribes such as the Tayrahids. (The Christian monastery may indeed have been built on the site of an ancient place of worship. On the significance of caves see further below, pp. 59, 60.) Such feelings on the part of non-Muslims might not have seemed relevant to Sheykh 'Adī, but the influence and power of the local Kurdish element presumably grew stronger in the course of time, and they might well have acted exactly as "Ramisho'" claims.
[42] Quoted by Frank 1911: 46. Guidi (1932b: 416) gives his name as al-Ḥasan Shams al-Dīn Tāj al-'Ārifīn b. 'Adī Abī 'l-Mafākhir b. 'Abī 'l-Barakāt b. Ṣakhr b. Musāfir.
[43] See, e.g., Guidi 1932b: 416. He is often referred to in Kurdish as "Sheykh Sin".
[44] See Patton 1991: 65, with n. 72. The same date is given by Lescot (1938: 102), following al-Fūṭī (or "Fuwaṭī"). Al-Kutubī, however, states that Sheykh Ḥasan was executed in 1246 (644 H.Q.), see Frank 1911: 47, and Guidi 1932b: 421, who calls this date plausible.
[45] See Patton 1991. In the Yezidi tradition Badr al-Dīn is also known as the "Zangid Sultan", see T. 15, below.
[46] Patton 1991: 65. According to al-Maqrīzī (see p. 34f) this happened again ca. 1414.
[47] Attributed by al-'Azzawī (1935: 527) to al-Fūṭī, quoted by Guidi 1932b: 417.
[48] Quoted by Frank 1911: 47.
[49] First quoted in Taymur 1347: 19, and summarised by Guidi 1932b: 417; Lescot 1938: 35-36.
[50] That such fears were not unrealistic is suggested by a more recent incident, described by Van Bruinessen (1992: 251), in which the followers of a Kurdish religious leader declared that their Sheykh was the Mahdī (i.e., the Saviour whose advent introduces the Millennnium). When the

man refused to go along with this he was beaten up and, according to some, thrown out of a window to see if he could fly.

[51] Hitti 1937: 689.

[52] Ibn Ṭaymiyya, *Majmū'āt al-Rasā'il al-Kubrā*, Cairo 1323. Vol. I, pp. 262-317: *Risālat al-'Adawiyya*.

[53] Ibn Ṭaymiyya 1323: 300, summarised by Lescot 1938: 39; see also Guidi 1932b: 417.

[54] *Dhakhā'ir al-Qaṣr fī Tarājim Nubalā' al-'Aṣr*, attributed by Taymūr (1347: 20) to Ibn Ṭulūn al-Ḥanafī al-Ṣāliḥī, see Guidi 1932b: 417; Lescot 1938: 34.

[55] The *Jilwe* is attributed by some to Sheykh Adi and by others to Sheykh Hesen, see above, Ch. 1, n. 103.

[56] A number of these traditions are also found in the *Kitāb Manāqib al-Shaykh 'Adī ibn Musāfir*, on which see Frank 1911: 55f; for an analysis of Sheykh Ḥasan's treatise see Frank 1911: 46-50.

[57] See Frank 1911: 49. Sheykh 'Adī himself, it seems, also approved of this speech, see *ibid.* n. 1.

[58] Witness the frequent references to both leaders and members of the order as Kurds, see above and cf. Ibn Ḥajar in Lescot 1938: 106.

[59] I.e., 655 H.Q. Sheref el-Dîn still has a prominent place in Yezidi legend (see further below). The hypothesis, first advanced by Guidi (1932b: 422 with n. 3) and accepted by Lescot (1938: 234a, Genealogy), that Sheykh Ḥasan had a brother also called Sharaf al-Dīn was based on the evidence of "Ramisho'" and is unlikely to be true.

[60] The name is often pronounced and spelled *Ferkh* in Kurdish.

[61] Barhebreaus (in Frank 1911: 54) speaks of "the elder son who fled to Syria". The reference to Syria seems to point to Shams al-Dīn. However, Lescot (1938: 104), on the basis of the same passage, states that the ill-fated attempt at apology was made by Fakhr al-Dīn. The fact that Fakhr was a ruler, while Shams al-Dīn rebelled against him, may of course indicate that the former was indeed the elder.

[62] See below, p. 108.

[63] Lescot 1938: 104.

[64] Lescot 1938: 104-5.

[65] Ibn Ḥajar in Lescot 1938: 106.

[66] Or a year later, see al-Maqrīzī in Lescot 1938: 106, n. 4.

[67] Lescot 1938: 105-6.

[68] Lescot (1938: 112) points out that there was a Yezidi community at Kusayr in Syria as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century, which probably implies that tribes nearer to the centre in the Hakkari mountains had adopted the faith before this.

[69] The version published here is based on Frank's German translation (Frank 1911: 87-91).

[70] The following passage is clearly based on a hostile account.

[71] Note the similarity in meaning between this name ("gathering of friends") and the Ir. *Yāresān*, a term used for the Ahl-e Haqq.

[72] For a detailed account see Lescot 1938:112f, and Guest 1987, *passim*.

[73] For a popular legend about "Zendin" see Drower 1941: 59. Other versions of the tale exist.

[74] See Layard 1949: I. 276-7; Lescot 1938: 125; Guest 1987: 65. This shocking event is well remembered in the Yezidi community of Northern Iraq. In April 1992 Pîr Khidr Silêman informed me that the Yezidis used to hold regular meetings similar to the *jam'* of the Ahl-e Haqq (see further below, p. 53), but that the practice was discontinued as a result of the attack by the Bey of Rowanduz.

[75] Vansina 1985: 168-9: "There are many accounts for very recent times, tapering off as one goes farther back until one reaches time of origin for which, once again, there are many accounts... At the junction of times of origin and the very sparse subsequent records, there usually is a chronological gap."

[76] On the various forms of this belief in Yezidism see Anastase 1899: 153.

[77] Edmonds 1967: 6.
[78] Ishak of Bartella quoted in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 260-1, and Joseph 1909: 230.
[79] Viz as opposed to the many Adams of other cycles of history, on which see Ishak in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 254 (which account, incidentally, claims that the other faiths only know the *first* Adam). The Yezidi tradition shows further traces of a cyclical view of history; some believe that a divinity comes to the world every thousand years in order to establish the rules and laws for the millennium (Chabot 1896: 120; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 255; Empson 1928: 89). Such ideas, however, are not as pronounced in Yezidism as in the tradition of the Ahl-e Haqq (see Mokri 1967: 46f; Kreyenbroek 1992: 65).
[80] The name Shehîd, i.e., "Witness", may derive from the well known Qur'anic description of God's Covenant with the unborn souls of men (*Qur'ān* 7: 171), whose reply to God's question, "Am I not your Lord?" was: "Indeed, we bear witness" (*balā shahidnā*).
[81] See Siouffi 1882: 259-60, where Shehîd is said to have been crippled when the jar was broken by force. Virtually the same account is found in many other sources, such as Giamil 1900: 17-18; Lescot 1938: 59; Yazidi 1983: 85. Lady Drower's Yezidi informant also recounted the Shehîd story, but denied that the Yezidis' origin differed from that of the rest of mankind (Drower 1941: 91f). The version given by Chabot 1896: 118f, differs on some points. A very different account, probably influenced by the Christian tradition, is found in Dirr 1917-18: 564f.
[82] See, among several others, Chabot 1896: 120-1; Lescot 1938: 61.
[83] Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 255. Furlani (1930: 15) mentions a tradition representing Yezîd as a manifestation of Melek Tawus.
[84] Furlani 1930: 14. Lescot's informant told of Yezîd's conquest of Constantinople (Lescot 1938: 61f), one of a number of tales about the mighty victories of the Yezidis of old, cf. also Edmonds 1967: 46-8, and J. Blau's recording discussed above (p. 14), both of which deal with the conquest of Jerusalem.
[85] On the theme of a serpent threatening Sheykh Adi see also below, p. 48f.
[86] Siouffi, (1882: 262), who recounts this legend, remarks in a footnote that the passage refers to a time before Adi became incarnate, when he was still divine. Since a belief in such phenomena as reincarnation, incarnation of a divine being in human form and metempsychosis is implicit in many stories of the Yezidi tradition, however, this explanation is no more plausible than the assumption that Adi had simply been the monks' master in a previous life. (On reincarnation see also the *Jilwe*, Guest 1987: 201.)
[87] Siouffi 1882: 262-3. Furlani 1930: 14.
[88] He is generally known as "Sheykh Shems", or "Sheykh Shemsê Tebrîzî", cf. T. 12. The historical Shams-e Tabrīzī, the mystic who inspired the great Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273-4), lived about a century after Sheykh 'Adī's death.
[89] Although he is thus represented as a contemporary of Sheykh Adi, the story of Sheykh Shems's death at the hands of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' also lives on in the tradition. When asked about a popular Yezidi song about Sheref el-Dîn, Pîr Khidr Silêman told me the following story: "Sheykh Shems was the *wezîr* ("minister") of Sheykh Hesen. Sheykh Hesen was like al-Ḥallāj, he said what was in his heart. Sheykh Adi was more diplomatic. Sheykh Hesen said openly that he was divine, and at the same time part of this world. Even now the Yezidis are afraid to say such things openly. Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' then killed Sheykh Hesen. Shems el-Dîn, Hesen's minister, was in Tabriz at the time [cf. preceding note], and Sheref el-Dîn had run away to Jebel Sinjar. There were therefore no leaders at Lalish, and the text is part of a message which Sheref el-Dîn sent to the faithful there."
[90] Edmonds 1967: 4.
[91] Or "Sheykh Obekr", as his name is generally given in the tradition (see below, p. 101). In Lescot's Genealogy (Lescot 1938: 234a) Abū Bakr is listed as one of the sons of Sheykh Ḥasan.
[92] Perhaps a legendary counterpart of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.
[93] See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 247; Frank 1911: 9. Many modern Yezidis are familiar with this tradition, and it is often repeated.
[94] See below, p. 99, and Kreyenbroek 1992: 72.

[95] Nothing is known with certainty about the historical counterparts of Sejadîn or Naṣir el-Dîn. It seems likely that both were less prominent members of Sheykh Adi's family.
[96] See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 247; Edmonds 1967: 5. The names Adanî and Qatanî most probably derive from the appellations 'Adnānī and Qaḥṭānī, used by North and South Arabian tribes respectively, see Hitti 1937: 280; Edmonds 1967: 31.
[97] See Vansina 1985: 167.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

There can be little doubt, in view of what went before, that Yezidism developed out of a movement representing a mystical interpretation of Islam. It is equally indisputable, however, that the ideas and teachings of Sufism can account only in part for the beliefs, practices and attitudes of Yezidism as it eventually became. Several features of apparently non-Islamic origin, moreover, are not uniquely Yezidi but can also be found in the religion of the Ahl-e Haqq, a sect which like Yezidism seems to have originated among speakers of Western Iranian languages and has its oldest centre in Kurdistan. It seems to be characteristic of both these groups that they are capable of absorbing alien ideas easily but superficially, integrating them into their belief system without altering its fundamental structure. As a result, both faiths show many individual features that can be traced back to various religions which once flourished in the Middle East or inspired the culture of later immigrants.[1] At a future stage, when our knowledge of the religions in question has increased, a detailed comparison between Yezidism and several other faiths may well prove fruitful, but earlier works have shown that attempts to stress the importance of isolated points of resemblance are unproductive and indeed apt to lead to a distorted view of Yezidism (see above, Ch. 1). The similarities between the Ahl-e Haqq religion and Yezidism, however, are so strong that the possibility that they spring from shared roots cannot be dismissed as purely speculative; several features common to both systems, moreover, can be explained in the light of new insights in the character of pre-Islamic Western Iranian beliefs.

SHEYKH 'ADĪ'S TEACHINGS

As Frank has shown, the works attributed by Western scholars to Sheykh 'Adī b. Musāfir[2] contain nothing that would have seemed unorthodox to most Muslims of his time. The Sheykh, in fact, was a staunch Sunnite, stating that only those believers are righteous who follow Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, although he also claimed that both 'Alī and Mu'āwiya were "zealous Imāms".[3] Sheykh 'Adī stressed God's omnipotence and the insufficiency of human reason to apprehend Truth; only acceptance of revealed Truth (*sam'*), and reflection on the basis of what is revealed (*'aql*) can lead to knowledge of God.[4] In the *Kitāb fīhi Dhikr Ādāb al-Nafs,* Sheykh 'Adī speaks of his *ṭarīqa,*[5] and warns against the evil effects of "invocations" (*da'āwā).*[6] This term could refer to the invocation of the Names of God, and it is widely taken to imply a condemnation of the practice of the *dhikr* generally.[7] This seems to carry conjecture too far, however, and is the more unlikely in view of the frequent occurrence of the word *dhikr* in the later Yezidi tradition.[8] It hardly seems probable that the community would have continued to use the term in a positive sense if the practice was so strongly denounced by Sheykh 'Adī.[9] It has also been suggested that the words reflect the Sheykh's low opinion of the value of (individual) prayer;[10] this seems more plausible both in view of what we know of Sheykh 'Adī's views on individual action on the part of *murīds* (see Ch. 2), and of modern Yezidi attitudes towards such prayers.

The question of Sheykh 'Adī's teaching about the question of Evil, and particularly about Satan, is of course of interest to students of Yezidism. As is well known, as early as the tenth century there were Sufis whose views in this matter differed radically from those of mainstream Muslims. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 921) claimed that Iblīs was more monotheistic than God.[11] Sheykh 'Adī's contemporary Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, who is sometimes regarded as "the classical representative of Satan's rehabilitation",[12] said, "He who does not learn *tawḥīd* from Satan is an infidel." The great Persian poet Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 1220) also spoke of the devil in terms of approval.[13]

In his *I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunna wa 'l-Jamā'a,* Sheykh 'Adī affirmed that evil and the devil were created by God, rejecting the teachings of the Qadariyya movement,[14] which held that good and evil each had their own creator.[15] One of his arguments is the following:[16]

> Another proof is that, if Evil existed without the Will of God, Most High, then God would be powerless,[17] and a powerless one cannot be God, since it is impossible for anything to exist in His house that He does not will, just as nothing can exist in it that He does not know.

It is interesting to note that, although a certain veneration for Iblīs was not unknown in Sufi circles in his time, Sheykh 'Adī's work shows no trace of such attitudes and goes no further than to affirm that Satan is subordinate to God's omnipotence.

The evidence of Sheykh Ḥasan's work (see above, Ch. 2), suggesting that Sheykh 'Adī believed in the absolute authority of the Sufi Master and the disciple's utter dependence on him, is complemented by that of the Sheykh's own *Qaṣīdas*.[18] In these poems, the Sheykh describes his high mystical status, the grace shown to him by God, and his special position in he world and indeed in the universe. His verses include the following:

> And I became Sultan over all servants (of God)
> All kings of the earth come to me in subjection...
>
> All men of God have made *ṭawāf* around me
> And as to the Ka'ba, it comes to me in pilgrimage...
>
> My disciple, hold on to me and rely on me,
> I am the sword of this existence because of all my greatness.[19]
>
> My disciple, good tidings for you, by the Lord of Might, and happiness:
> Freedom from (Hell-)fire for adhering to my *ṭarīqa*...
>
> I was seated in the Holy Valley,
> On Mount Sinai, since I donned my robe of honour.[20]
>
> The Angels made *ṭawāf* around me...

Sheykh 'Adī's followers, it seems, held similar views on the status of their Sheykh or even more exaggerated ones; according to one source the Sheykh was obliged to eat in public in order to discourage speculations that he was divine.[21] It is well known that self-praise of this kind was not unusual among Sufis of the period, witness for example 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī's famous words, "My foot is on the neck of every saint of God."[22] It is now generally recognised, however, that 'Abd al-Qādir did not become the founder of an Order during his life-time,[23] nor is it likely that promises of "freedom from Hellfire" to anyone who followed a Master,

regardless of personal merits, can be considered typical of twelfth-century Sufism. As was argued above, such attitudes, in a community relatively isolated from the rest of the Islamic world, would have facilitated the absorption of ideas of non-Islamic origin into the sect's belief system. They may thus have contributed to the gradual erosion of the Islamic content of Yezidism, while its outward form retained many of its Sufi characteristics.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE QASIDAS

The incorporation of non-Islamic elements into the Yezidi tradition is aptly demonstrated by the contents of *Qaṣīdas* III and IV, which were at one time attributed to Sheykh 'Adī but must in fact be of a later date.[24] The middle passage of *Qaṣīda* III runs as follows:[25]

> ... I lived at Lalish in glory and happiness.
>
> al-Qādirī came to me and likewise Ibn al-Rifā'ī,
> And Abū 'l-Wafā, oh young man, came to me riding a lion.
>
> And I rode something without life, without body:
> A massive rock which followed after me.
>
> When we had met, the saints and I, they stopped;
> And bent over me like a father over a child.
>
> I invited them into my house that I might be their companion,
> In a lonely cell where I had been alone for ten years.
>
> Then they brought out a snake in order to to frighten me.
> But I hit it with my spear, I tore it to ribbons.
>
> Water streamed from its mouth which, oh miracle,
> Was like a clear spring...

These themes recur in *Qaṣīda* IV.[26] The Sheykh rides a piece of rock, and his rivals, in order to test him, seek to have him killed by a snake. When Sheykh Adi kills the snake, water gushes from its mouth. The "Hymn of Sheykh Adi",[27] which probably represents yet a later stage in the development of Yezidi mythology, contains the following version:[28]

And I am he to whom the destroying lion came,
Raging, and I shouted against it and it became stone.
And I am he to whom the serpent came
And by my will I made it dust
And I am he who struck the rock and made it tremble
And caused the sweetest of waters to burst from its side...

The latter version, which does not mention that the stone was ridden but introduces the image of a lion in connection with it, is reminiscent of T. 16. 9-20. There, at Sheykh Adi's command, his disciple Meḥmed Reshan rides a rock and impresses Sheykh Adi's rivals who had arrived riding lions.[29] The "Hymn of Sheykh Adi", moreover, interposes the striking of a rock between the killing of the serpent and the flowing of the water. The legend about Sheykh Adi's miraculous production of water by striking a rock with his staff is recounted in T. 16. 31. It is still told today in connection with a number of springs in the Lalish area.[30] A tale about Sheykh Adi's killing of a serpent, without reference to water, is also found in a text said to derive from the *Kitāb al-Ḥabashī*.[31]

It seems likely, however, that such versions are the result of an attempt to simplify the original story, which is still found in *Qaṣīdas* III and IV, but whose significance was probably forgotten in the course of time. In the later, Christian version of an ancient Armenian legend, two *vishaps* (i.e., beings which could assume various forms, often that of a snake), are said to have attacked a Christian theologian. The man made the sign of the cross, causing the monsters to become stone, while a stream of water sprang from the navel of one of them.[32] In pre-Christian Armenia, defeating such monsters was a characteristic function of the God Vahagn, the Armenian equivalent of the Avestan Verethraghna.[33] Verethraghna, in turn, is in many ways the Iranian counterpart of the Indian Indra,[34] who is described in the *Rigveda* as the auctor of the second stage of creation. By slaying a serpent or monster, Indra released the waters and other 'elements' of creation from their confinement, presumably in a cave-like stone enclosure.[35] A Rigvedic verse in fact provides a close parallel to the Yezidi *Qaṣīdas*:[36] "Who, having slain the serpent, released the seven streams... he, oh men, is Indra".

As will be shown below, both the Vedic and the Zoroastrian accounts of the cosmogony represent departures from an older Indo-Iranian version. The fundamental structure of this older myth can, however, be deduced; it seems

probable that the beginning of the 'second stage of creation' was accompanied by the ritual sacrifice of a bull. The older myth appears to have directly influenced the creation myth found in the *Meshef Resh* and the *Qewls*. It is likely, however, that an account similar to the Vedic one— presenting the slaying of a serpent as the act which brought about the present state of the world—also existed among Western Iranians and Armenians, as an alternative myth or simply as a tale or legend. Since it seems impossible that a Sufi Sheykh would have claimed such feats as his own, it follows that the *Qaṣīdas* represent a somewhat later stage in the development of Yezidi mythology, in which themes deriving from Iranian myths had merged with those of Islamic hagiography.

ASPECTS OF SYNCRETISM

One can only speculate as to whether Sheykh 'Adī himself would have allowed such myths to be told in his community, and the same is true of his feelings about the attitudes of his followers concerning Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya. In view of the pro-Umayyad climate in Kurdistan at the time, and of his own descent, it seems probable enough that he encouraged a respectful attitude, but it is difficult to reconcile the orthodox tone of his works with the religious fervour implied by a text written in 1325:[37]

> Those ignorant ones began to cherish and praise Yazīd, without knowing his true nature. They go as far as to say, in the excess of their veneration for him and in the excess of their deviation, "The blood and goods of those who do not love Yazīd are licit to us. Nor can we follow a man of the other Muslims in prayer." They stopped attending the Friday prayers.

As Lescot has shown, belief in the Imamate of Yazīd was felt to be the fundamental characteristic of the Kurdish 'Adawis, while some went so far as to call him a prophet.[38] To such excesses these proto-Yezidis then added the veneration of Sheykh Adi himself and his successors. Ibn Ṭaymiyya's work suggests that in the fourteenth century some of the faithful thought that Sheykh Adi was a saint, some that he was divine, while others believed that he and his successors were incarnations of angels.[39] All these views can still be found among modern Yezidis.

A factor which probably contributed to the development of such ambiguities is the style of many religious texts, including the *Jilwe*, the *Qaṣīdas*, and texts said to derive from the *Kitāb al-Ḥabashī*.[40] These are typically in the first person

singular, describing the status, virtues and exploits of the protagonist with a great deal of hyperbole. As has been shown earlier (Ch. 1), the "I" of the *Jilwe* can hardly be Sheykh Adi, but there is no doubt that the other works are indeed intended to convey the greatness of the Sheykh, in terms such as the following:[41]

> How dare ye deny me when I am truly your God and I wipe out and I write down (destiny)... How dare you deny me...when I, the Ancient of Time, created the world? And ye ask me about my lower abode. I tell you of the dominion which was established on the rock.
>
> They named me 'Adī, but I am the 'Adī of all... I am the 'Adī of yesterday, of the day before yesterday, of today, of the past, and of what is to come.
>
> I am a unique Sheykh; and it is I, myself, who created things. It is I who received a book, a book of good tidings. It came from my God piercing the mountains. It is to me that all men come. They come in submission and kiss my feet.
>
> I am the Syrian 'Adī, the son of Musāfir. The compassionate God has favoured me by names.[42] The Throne, the Chair, and the Earth (?) are within the secret of my knowledge. There is no God but I.

Sheykh Adi, then, is both creator and created, eternal and temporal, simultaneously God, prophet and hero.

Several elements of this kind of poetry can of course be traced to the Sufi tradition. It is not unusual in the mystical poetry of Islam to describe God's qualities in terms like those found here, and several Sufis experienced a sense of unity with God which could lead to such pronouncements as al-Ḥallāj's famous "I am the Truth."[43] Yet the Yezidis' views on Sheykh Adi would undoubtedly seem unacceptable to most Muslims, whether Sufi or orthodox. It is the intention of the words—the implicit claim that Sheykh Adi has not merely reached a vision or achieved a realisation of the divine, but that he has come to embody divinity more or less in its entirety—that makes these works alien to the spirit of mainstream Islam. Similarly, while the Yezidi tradition uses many terms, images and symbols of Sufi or Muslim origin, it is the significance and connotations these have acquired in Yezidism that makes that faith seem so different from most forms of Sufism. Such archetypal Sufi personalities as al-Ḥallāj, Bāyazīd of Bisṭām and Rābi'a figure as protagonists in Yezidi traditional texts,[44] yet there can be no doubt as to the essentially Yezidi character of the imagery and frame of reference of those texts.

Such concepts as love, and images like those of the "patched frock" (*khirqa*), which are often met with in Sufi poetry, have acquired special meanings in the Yezidi tradition.[45] The word *sirr*, which in the Sufi tradition means "secret, the innermost part of the heart",[46] in Yezidi texts often refers to the mysterious nature of the members of a Heptad of divine beings,[47] while the terms *sheykh* and *pîr* are used for members of hereditary 'priestly' classes which have no counterpart in Islam.

THE YEZIDIS AND THE AHL-E ḤAQQ

A very similar priestly 'caste' is found among the Ahl-e Haqq ("People of Truth"), a sect which probably originated in the Kurdish mountains,[48] and still has important communities there, both in Iraq and in the Iranian province of Kermanshah.[49] Members of the sect often refer to themselves as "Yāresān" (hereafter Yaresan),[50] and in Iraqi Kurdistan they are known by the name of "Kākā'ī" (hereafter Kaka'i). Although there are dissensions within the community as to its religious allegiance, there is no doubt that, while the Yezidis are outside the pale of Islam, the majority of the Yaresan would regard themselves as a branch of Shi'ite Islam, and they are accepted as such by their neighbours. Nevertheless, the points of similarity between the two faiths are striking. Just as every Yezidi must have a Sheykh and Pīr, so each member of the Yaresan owes allegiance to a "Pīr" and "Dalīl", members of a hereditary group of religious leaders collectively known as "Sayyids". Each of the eleven *khāndāns* ("families" or "holy lineages")[51] comprises both Sayyids and their lay *murīds*, who owe obedience to their Pīrs and must be initiated by them. As in the case of the Yezidi Sheykhs (see Ch. 2, 5), the Ahl-e Haqq Sayyids trace their lineage to holy men of old—in some cases to the *Haftan* or "Heptad", in others to a second group of seven holy beings, the *Haftawāna*,[52] or to the "Seventy-two Pīrs".[53]

The names usually given to the members of the Ahl-e Haqq *Haftan* differ from those normally used for the Yezidi Heptad. Only Melek Tawus is identified by some Ahl-e Haqq with their angel Dāwūd.[54] In both sects, however, the members of the Heptad are known to be incarnations of the Great Angels, such as Jibrā'īl, Mīkā'īl, Isrāfīl, 'Azrā'īl.[55] The Yaresan believe that history is cyclical, and that the Heptad becomes incarnate in different "guises" in each cycle. Such a cyclical view of history has echoes in Yezidism but is less prominent there.[56] Both Yezidis and

Ahl-e Haqq recognise the special position within the Heptad of a group of four angels, whose links with the four 'elements', Fire, Water, Earth and Wind, are stressed in both traditions.[57] The members of the Yaresan *Haftan* are best known by the names they bore as companions to Solṭān Saḥāk (or Sulṭān Isḥāq, hereafter Soltan Sahak). The latter has been described as "the real founder of the sect, the reformer who revived the forgotten or neglected ancient laws".[58] He could thus be said to be the Yaresan counterpart to Sheykh Adi. Although there is no clear evidence—the objective history of the Yaresan being less well-documented than that of the Yezidis—Soltan Sahak is widely believed to have lived in the fourteenth/fifteenth century,[59] i.e., about two centuries after Sheykh 'Adī.

In the field of ritual and observance the two groups again show striking similarities. Both Yezidis and Kurdish Ahl-e Haqq object to the use of words for "Satan".[60] Both observe a three-day fast in mid-winter, associated with a great figure of the faith. The Yezidis are required to fast before the feast of the the birth of Êzîd (see Ch. 6). The Yaresan fast commemorates the three days which Soltan Sahak spent in a cave[61] when pursued by his brothers; the fourth day a feast is held to celebrate his release.[62] Such a fast is, of course, entirely unknown to Islam. In both traditions, musical instruments which are played when the sacred texts are recited, are held to be sacred. The Yezidis have two such instruments which are played by Qewwals:[63] the *def*, a large tambourine, and a flute called *shibab*. The Ahl-e Haqq have a similar veneration for the *tanbūr*, a kind of lute which is played during the *jam'* ritual.[64] Some Yezidis claim that they once had a ritual similar to the Yaresan *jam'*, but no such rite has been performed within living memory and these claims seem incapable of proof.[65] The Yaresan prostrate themselves on the threshold of the place where the *jam'* is held (*jam'khāna*), as the Yezidis do on the threshold of the Shrine of Sheykh Adi.[66] Members of both sects traditionally object to shaving off their moustaches and facial hair.[67] The Yaresan have an institution similar to that of the Yezidi 'Brother (Sister) of the Hereafter';[68] this is essentially an unalterable contract of brotherhood (or sisterhood) between two or more persons who will share one another's merits and sins on the day of the Resurrection.[69] During the ceremony when this contract is concluded—as during the initiation ceremony[70]—a nutmeg (Pers. *jouz*) is cut or broken into pieces and ritually consumed.[71] No such custom is known to exist in Yezidism, but the walnut (Kurd. *gûz*, the etymological equivalent of Pers. *jouz*) is still regarded as sacred.[72]

Furthermore, the two sects have a significant number of myths and legends in common. As was shown above, tales of a contest between a saint riding a lion and an even more powerful one who rides a rock or wall have a place in both traditions. The image of setting a snare to catch falcons or eagles—which represent the various Angels and at the same time the divine generally—has long been known to be the theme of an Ahl-e Haqq *kalām*.[73] It is also the main theme of the Yezidi text published below as T. 13.

THE COSMOGONY

Perhaps the most striking resemblances, however, can be found in myths and legends about the First Things, the creation of the world and events immediately preceding or following it. A story occurs as part of the Ahl-e Haqq account of the Creation that, after the Covenant and the bull-sacrifice (on which see below), the creations evolved from the *Haftan*. The earth came to rest on the horns of a bull, on whose back stood a lion, and which itself stood on a stone placed on the back of a fish; the Yezidi tradition refers frequently to the "Bull and the Fish".[74] A Yezidi myth tells that before creation, when there was only the primeval ocean, a tree grew up. God perched on the tree in the form of a bird. Melek Tawus, also in the shape of a bird, roamed over the ocean and finally came to the tree, on which he wanted to alight. God, however, would not let him rest there before the other had realised that God was his creator.[75] Elsewhere, the same myth is found with Gabriel, rather than Melek Tawus, as the second protagonist.[76] The same myth is found in the Ahl-e Haqq tradition, where Jibrā'īl is also the second divinity.[77]

The elements of the central myth of the cosmogony correspond almost exactly in both traditions. The published versions of the Ahl-e Haqq myth are somewhat more detailed than the known Yezidi texts, and the following sequence of events can be inferred from them. Before Heaven and Earth existed, God created a Pearl[78] from his own pure Light,[79] and came to dwell in it. The world was then created in two stages.[80] A Cry was uttered[81] and Water was created.[82] God created the *Sāj-e Nār*, the "Frying Pan of Fire", which was situated under the bottom of the Cosmic Ocean.[83] The *Sāj* heated the water,[84] and heaven was made from its vapour, earth from its foam. Then God created Jibrā'īl, who is also known as Pīr Binyāmīn. In some accounts the story is then told of Jibrā'īl's roaming over the waters while ignorant of his Creator, and his subsequent enlightenment.[85] Pīr Dāwūd, the first

member of the *Haftan* under Binyāmīn, was created as a witness to the Covenant between God and Binyāmīn, and the other members of the Heptad as further witnesses. The Covenant is then described again. The role of each of the Angels was defined at this time, and God acceded to their request to create the world, on condition that they would obey his law and become manifest on earth at certain times. The guardianship of the Covenant was bestowed on Binyāmīn.[86] The ritual sacrifice of a bull[87] was made at this time. Then the world was created in its present form: the earth and the sky, which had been unstable, became steady.[88]

Several Yezidi *Qewls* (e.g.T. 1, 2) deal with the Cosmogony; their allusive style indicates that it was assumed that the community was familiar with its salient points. A relatively clear and coherent account is found, however, in the *Meshef Resh*:[89]

(1) In the beginning God created the White Pearl from his own beloved essence,[90] and he created a white dove whom he named Enfer. He placed the pearl on its back and sat on it for forty thousand years.

(2) The first day which he created was Sunday. On (that day) he created an angel whose name was 'Ezra'îl. That is Melek Tawus, who is the greatest of all.[91]

(3) On Monday he created the Angel Derda'îl, who is Sheykh Hesen.

(4) On Tuesday he created the Angel Israfîl, who is Sheykh Shems.

(5) On Wednesday he created the Angel Mîka'îl, who is Sheykh Ebû Bekr.

(6) On Thursday he created the Angel Jibra'îl, who is Sejad el-Dîn.

(7) On Friday he created the Angel Shemna'îl, who is Naṣir el-Dîn.

(8) On Saturday he created the Angel Ṭûra'îl, who is Fekhr el-Dîn.

(9) And God made Melek Tawus the greatest of them.

(10) After this he created the form of the seven heavens, the earth, the sun and the moon.

(11) Fekhr el-Dîn[92] created man and animals and birds and beasts, and placed them in the folds of his habit. Together with the Angels he came out of the Pearl. He uttered a tremendous cry over the Pearl. It came apart into four pieces. Water gushed forth from its inside, and became the sea. The world

was round and without holes.

(12) Then he created Jibra'îl in he form of a bird, and sent him forth and gave the four corners into his hand. After this he created a ship and dwelt on the water for thirty thousand years. Then he came and settled in Lalish. He let out a cry in the world and fastened the stones. The world became earth and began to quiver. Then he gave a command to Jibra'îl, and it settled down...

The essentials of the myth are stated once again towards the end of the text:[93]

(28) Before earth and heaven God was on the ocean. He made himself a ship,[94] and he was in the midst of the waters, circling around.

(29) He made the Pearl from himself and ruled over it for forty years. After that he kicked it.

(30) Oh wonder! From the tumult and uproar of this those mountains (were created). From the dust those hills, and from the smoke that heaven was made. He established it and made it solid and supported it without columns.

(31) Then he locked the earth, and took a pen in his hand an began to write down (the names of) all creatures.

(32) After that he created six divinities from his essence and his light. The creation was as one lights a lamp from another lamp with fire.

(33) The first God said to the second God: "I have created the Sky. Now rise up (in your turn), go to the sky and create something." He rose up and the Sun came into being. And he said (the same thing) to the next. He rose up and the Moon came into being. The fourth created the horizon. The fifth created the Morning Star. The sixth created the atmosphere.

Both traditions, then, recognise one God, the Primeval Creator, who initially fashioned a Pearl, a small round object which contained all the elements that were to form the Universe. He then evoked a Heptad of Angels or divinities, with whom he made a Covenant,[95] and whose leader can be regarded as the 'Lord of this world'. The Yaresan tradition explicitly mentions a bull-sacrifice in connection with the Covenant. The annual sacrifice of a bull during the Yezidi Feast of the Assembly—when Melek Tawus and the Heptad are held to be gathered in order to decide the events of the coming year[96]—suggests that in Yezidism also the primeval gathering

of the Heptad was believed to be accompanied by such a sacrifice. From the embryonic state implicit in the image of the Pearl, the world is then created as we know it now, and entrusted to the care of the Heptad.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE ZOROASTRIAN COSMOGONY

Several elements of this myth strongly resemble the Zoroastrian account of the creation of the material world.[97] A cosmogony in two stages, a Heptad of divine beings who are in charge of the world and have links with the 'elements' of which the creation consists, are all found in the Zoroastrian tradition. The clearest and most detailed versions of this myth are found in the *Greater Bundahishn* (hereafter GBd.) and in the *Selections of Zādsparam* (hereafter Zadsp.).[98]

It is said there that, in the beginning the beneficent Creator, Ohrmazd, dwelt on high, in pure light. Ahreman, his evil counterpart, was in the depths, in darkness. Ohrmazd was aware of the antagonism of Ahreman. To prepare himself for battle, he first created his seven Creations in a non-material state, in the form of "bright white fire".[99] The Creations remained in this state for three thousand years. Ahreman created his demonic creations out of darkness. Ahreman then attacked the luminous world. Ohrmazd initially offered peace, which was rejected by the Evil Spirit. Finally, the two Spirits made a "Pact" or "Covenant",[100] to wage war in a well-defined battlefield, the world, for a limited period of time. The three stages of the ensuing cosmic drama are: "Creation", i.e., in material form; "Mixture"; and "Separation", i.e., of Evil from Good.

The stage of "Creation" began after the Pact. Ohrmazd recited a prayer, which caused Ahreman to fall back into the darkness, in a stupor which lasted for the entire period of the Creation. During this time Ohrmazd fashioned his Creations in material form, and celebrated a "spiritual sacrifice" together with the other members of the Heptad (the *Amesha Spentas*).[101] Ohrmazd became the special guardian of Man, and each of the other Creations was placed under the protection of one of the *Amesha Spentas*. The seven original Creations were: the Sky (originally thought to be made of stone, later of crystal,[102] and enclosing the world like an egg[103]); Water; the Earth (a flat disc floating on the water which filled the lower half of the "egg"); a single Plant or Tree; one Bull; the single First Man; and, finally, Fire.[104] During the three thousand years of the "Creation" these were motionless and light, with the sun standing still in the middle of the sky.

Ahreman made a renewed attack, which proved successful and led to the second stage of the development of the material world, that of "Mixture". Ahreman penetrated the Sky, polluted the Waters, made a hole in the Earth, caused the Plant to wither, killed the Bull and the Man, and tainted Fire with smoke. Initially, it seems, Ahreman was victorious; the world was dark.[105] Then movement entered the world, and the good Creations began to fight back. Night alternated with day. The Waters flowed. Mountains grew up on the earth, which was 'anchored' by their roots. The first rain divided the original land-mass into seven continents. The dried Plant was pounded and mixed with water, which caused plant-life to develop. The seed of the Bull became the source of animal life, and the first human couple developed from the semen of the First Man. Fire protected the world of righteousness and made life and movement possible.[106] This is the stage in which we now live; it will end with the coming of "Separation", when the powers of Evil have been defeated.

THE INDO-IRANIAN MYTH OF THE CREATION

In contrast to the cosmogonies of the Yezidis and Ahl-e Haqq, the Zoroastrian myth thus states that the material world was originally created perfect and light, and that the present state of the world was brought about by the incursion of the Evil Spirit, constituting a lapse from an ideal state to which the universe will eventually return. Several considerations suggest, however, that the Zoroastrian cosmogony is based upon a reinterpretation of an older myth, which described the second stage as a positive development, brought about by a beneficent creative act. Such a view of the first things is implied by a number of passages in the Avesta,[107] where traces can also be found of a stage in the development of the myth in which both the Beneficent Spirit (*Spenta Mainyu)* and the Evil Spirit (Av. *Angra Mainyu,* Phl. *Ahreman*), not the latter alone, played a role in the transition from the first to the second stage.[108] Moreover, the parallellism between the killing of a bull and the pounding of a plant in the myth, and the ritual of the central Zoroastrian sacrificial act—which has a counterpart in India and is clearly of Indo-Iranian origin—strongly suggests that the realities of the ritual may have inspired the myth of the cosmogony. If the Zoroastrian version were regarded as original, however, the parallellism between priestly sacrifice and creative act would be fundamentally flawed, since the latter is represented as the negative result of a wicked act of

killing, while the former was evidently regarded as beneficial.

In the Indian sphere, the Veda contains accounts which show a structure broadly corresponding to that of the Zoroastrian myth: a creation in two stages, the second of which is initiated by the slaying of a snake[109] or monster—the heroic, warriors' equivalent, it would seem, of the priestly myth of creation through sacrifice. This act leads to the liberation of "the Waters" and "the Cows", which had been enclosed in a narrow space. In the Vedic myth, as in the Yezidi cosmogony, the second act of creation is represented as wholly beneficial, the first stage being described as dark, motionless and confined. Fire[110] and the sun were hidden in the rock enclosing the cave-like space (*vala*) until the beginning of the second stage.[111] In the Indo-Iranian religion, it seems, the divinity who was held to rule over fire was Mit(h)ra,[112] and it is thus Mit(h)ra's 'element' which entered the world when the second stage began. Although in the Vedic and Zoroastrian versions the creative act leading to the second stage is attributed to other beings, it seems very probable therefore that the original, Indo-Iranian demiurge was Mit(h)ra.[113] The Indo-Iranian myth of the creation may thus have claimed that, by means of a primeval rite involving the sacrifice of a bull, Mit(h)ra, lord of fire, light, and energy, liberated the Creations from confinement in a small, cave-like space, and brought light and movement to the world.[114]

CONCLUSION

The similarity between the structures of this reconstructed myth and the accounts of the Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq traditions seems unmistakable. It is generally held that Zoroastrianism originated and developed among Eastern Iranian peoples and did not come to western parts of Iran until later, becoming prominent there at the time of the Achaemenian Empire.[115] It seems likely that, during the centuries before the advent of Zoroastrianism, the Western Iranians continued to practise a cult which derived directly from the Indo-Iranian tradition. In view of what went before it seems very probable that elements of this older faith survived in the isolation of the Kurdish mountains.

It is impossible to determine with certainty whether Western Iranian followers of the old faith remained entirely separate from Zoroastrianism, which for a long time constituted the dominant religion in the Iranian realms, or if they accepted that faith but continued to tell their ancient myths as part of it. Such traits as the belief in

strong links between divinities and elements,[116] the concern for the purity of the latter,[117] and the observance of a spring New Year and an important autumn festival (see below, Ch. 6) are common to both Zoroastrianism and Yezidism, as is the traditional obligation of wearing a 'sacred shirt' and, in some cases, a girdle.[118] Furthermore, Zoroastrianism traditionally knew a complex hereditary priesthood; the Pahlavi books show that, like the later Yezidis and Ahl-e Haqq, all Zoroastrians at one time had to accept a member of this priesthood as their spiritual director, to whom they owed obedience and whose authority lent validity to their religious acts.[119] The notion of cyclical time is prominent in Zurvanism, a variant of the Zoroastrian faith which probably developed in Western Iran.[120] While the similarity between Yezidism and Zoroastrianism on all these points seems to corroborate the view that Iranian elements played an important role in the development of Yezidism, many such features may equally have been part of the older, Western Iranian faith.[121] Moreover, although modern Yezidis frequently refer to Zarathustra as the founder of their religion,[122] his name does not appear to be attested in the textual tradition, which could indicate that his current popularity is of recent origin.

Unless one seeks to explain the Yezidis' veneration for Melek Tawus, and the taboo on words for "Satan", etc., entirely as the result of Sheykh 'Adī's teachings concerning the devil, the complexities of this element of Yezidism can best be explained as resulting from a clash between Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian ideas. That some of its symbolism predates Sheykh 'Adī is shown by the fact that a pre-Islamic Armenian source states that a link between the devil and the peacock existed in the Zoroastrian tradition.[123] The parallellism between Mithra's functions as a demiurge in the postulated Western Iranian myth, and those attributed Ahreman in the *Bundahishn*—notably the killing of a bull at the beginning of the present state of the world—suggests that traditional Western Iranian beliefs about Mithra may have been strongly challenged by the teachings of Zoroastrianism. This could have resulted in a popular notion that the demiurge and the devil were in fact identical, the devil being better equipped than God to deal with the imperfections of this world. If this is so, Zoroastrian influences on the system of beliefs that was to play a role in the origin of Yezidism can hardly be denied.

On the other hand, the image of a confined space from which the primeval Creations emerged to form the world[124]—which is represented by the Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq symbols of the Pearl and the Cave—is not found in Zoroastrianism,

where the first stage of Creation is described as spacious, light and ideal. Similarly, such traits as the Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq belief in reincarnation and the transmigration of souls are not attested in the Zoroastrian tradition, and could not logically be part of its doctrines.

Such ideas are, however, often said to have been part of the teachings of some Iranian heresiarchs of the eighth and ninth centuries, notably Bābak. Bābak, who like Sheykh Adi declared himself to be divine,[125] maintained his independence in Azerbaijan for over twenty years (816-38) in the face of 'Abbāsid opposition. He must therefore have enjoyed considerable support from the local Western Iranian population.[126] This suggests that his teachings—which could hardly have borne much resemblance to mainstream Zoroastrianism—seemed attractive and perhaps familiar to communities on the western periphery of the Iranian realm. A shrine to a Yezidi saint called Sheykh Babik is still to be found in the Lalish area; he is said to have been one of the sons of Sheykh Shems, and is the eponymous patron of a sub-division of the Shemsani Sheykhs (see Ch. 4, Appendix). Unless the similarity is pure coincidence, the fact that such a name is found in a Yezidi milieu seems to show that Bābak's legend lived on in the Kurdish mountains long after his death. Bābak's followers, moreover, are known to have worn black when they wished to conceal their true allegiance.[127] The Yezidi predilection for that colour[128] may possibly be an echo of the colour symbolism which played a role in defining various heretical movements in the Iranian areas at the time of the heresiarchs.[129]

Although many of these beliefs and practices probably go back to an older, pre-Zoroastrian cult, they could have subsisted as part of the popular religion of communities which at one time claimed to be Zoroastrian. All that can be confidently asserted, therefore, is that the religions of the Yezidis and the Yaresan have sprung from intensive contacts between Islam and a cult of Iranian origin which contained both Zoroastrian elements and traits that cannot be traced back to mainstream Zoroastrianism.[130]

Notes

1 See above, Ch. 1. One element whose influence may have been underestimated in the earlier literature on Yezidism is the pre-Islamic religion of the Turkic peoples. The religion of the Alevites of Turkey, which undoubtedly preserves features of this faith, shows some points of similarity to Yezidism and has even more in common with the beliefs of the Ahl-e Haqq. The Yezidis' veneration for the threshold of the shrine of Sheykh Adi, for example, may have its origin in ancient Turkic beliefs, see Kehl-Bodrogi 1988: 234.

2 Notably the *Kitāb I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunna wa 'l-Jamā'a* and the *Kitāb fīhi Dhikr Ādāb al-Nafs*, and to a lesser extent the *Waṣāyā 'l-Shaykh 'Adī b. Musāfir ilā 'l-Khalīfa* and *Waṣāyā li-Murīdihi Qā'id wa li-Sā'ir al-Murīdīn*, see Frank 1911: 10-29.

3 Frank 1911: 13-15. Cf. the repeated statements in the Texts (1. 7; 8. 7, 9), that the Yezidis have "cast their lot with the Tradition (*sunnet*)", staying aloof from Rāfiḍites (i.e., Shi'ites), heretics and, interestingly, "the people of the *Sharī'a*" (T. 8. 9).

4 So Frank 1911: 11.

5 I.e., "mystical Path, Sufi Order". The word also occurs in one of the *Qaṣīdas* attributed to him (see Frank 1911: 112-13), and in a *Qewl* (T. 8. 10).

6 "Know that invocations, even if sincere, extinguish the light of knowledge", see Frank 1911: 19-20.

7 Frank, 1911: 19-20, followed by Lescot 1938: 27.

8 E.g. T. 3. 8; 4. 12; 9. 37.

9 It is worth noting that such terms as *šāwīš* (*chawûsh*), "caretaker", *ṭāfa* (cf. *ṭiwaf*), "to circumambulate, (hold) a religious festival" and *ka's*, "cup", which are still part of the religious vocabulary of the Yezidis, already occur in Sheykh 'Adī's *Qaṣīda* (Frank 1911: 110).

10 Frank 1911: 20.

11 See Schimmel 1975: 194.

12 Schimmel 1975: 195.

13 See Schimmel, *loc. cit.*

14 This movement is not to be confused with the Qādiriyya Order.

15 Frank 1911: 12-13.

16 *I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunna wa 'l-Jamā'a*, in Frank 1911: 12. Sheykh 'Adī also cites *Qur'ān* 4. 80; 12. 66; 91. 7.

17 Ar. *'ājiz*.

18 It is assumed here, in the light of Frank's remarks (Frank 1911: 31), that *Qaṣīdas* I and II represent genuine works by Sheykh 'Adī. As will be shown below, the contents of other two (III and IV) indicate that, in their present form at least, they are of later origin.

19 Ar. *li-'kull aẓamatī*; Frank (1911: 111): für jede Größe.

20 This might conceivably be an allusion to the Lalish Valley, which would suggest that the identification of a local spring with the *Zamzam* of Mecca, and of a mountain in the Lalish Valley with *'Arafa*, could go back to Sheykh 'Adī himself.

21 *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*, cited by Lescot 1938: 39.

22 See Frank 1911: 30.

23 See Trimingham 1971: 40-4.

24 This seems to be implied by Frank's comments on the formal aspects of the works (Frank 1911: 31, 33-4).

25 Frank 1911: 120-1.

26 Frank 1911: 126-7.

27 I.e., the hymn which Layard (1853: 113-15) and Badger (1853: 89-92) saw at Lalish and published in translation. See also above, Ch. 1 with n. 23.

28 See Guest 1987: 205.

[29] A legend describing the rivalry between a Sheykh riding a lion and a holy being riding a wall, is found in Ahl-e Haqq mythology, see Hamzeh'ee 1990: 274.
[30] The traditional singer Chîcho, of Ba'drê, first told me this story in connection with the Kanî Baykî, a spring with medicinal properties in the Lalish valley. He later added that Sheykh Adi had brought forth several such springs in the same manner.
[31] See Frayha 1946: 37. On the *Kitāb al-Ḥabashī* see above, Ch. 1, n. 100.
[32] See Russell 1987: 206.
[33] Cf. Russell 1987: 213. Russell's thesis of a non-Iranian origin of these aspects of Vahagn's character seems unnecessary.
[34] See Benveniste and Renou 1934; Thieme 1960: 311-12. On the demonisation of the figure of Indra in the Zoroastrian tradition see Kreyenbroek 1993: 306.
[35] Only the sun and the cows are explicitly said to have been hidden in stone, but it can be inferred that the same was true of the waters, see Kreyenbroek 1993: 105.
[36] *Rigveda* II. 12.3, trsl. by Macdonnell (1917: 46).
[37] Abū 'l-Firās 'Ubayd Allah b. Shibl, *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā 'l-Rāfiḍa wa 'l-Yazīdiyya 'l-Mukhālifīn li 'l-Millat al-Islāmiyya*, see Lescot 1938: 37 with n. 2, 38.
[38] Lescot 1938: 38.
[39] Lescot 1938: 40.
[40] See Frayha 1946: 37f.
[41] Frayha 1946: 38-9.
[42] So Frayha 1946: 39.
[43] See Schimmel 1975: 55, 64 *et passim*.
[44] See O. and J. Jelîl 1978: II. 29-33, 37-40.
[45] On love as the force that gives life to the world see T. 2. 9, 11. For the imagery of the *khirqe* see esp. T. 5. 6; 7. 8.
[46] See Schimmel 1975: 192.
[47] T. 1. 31; 2. 25, 29; 5. 1, 14; 7. 6, 13 *et passim*. The word is used in its more general sense of "secret, mystery", in T. 2. 32.
[48] See Weightman 1964, and cf. Hamzeh'ee 1990: 49f.
[49] See Van Bruinessen 1992: 23.
[50] As was pointed out above, Ch. 2, n. 71, there may well be a link between the old name for the Yezidis mentioned by al-Maqrīzī, viz. *Ṣuḥbatiyya* ("group of friends"), and the term *yāresān*, whose most probable meaning is "gathering of friends" (*pace* Hamzeh'ee 1990: 28-9, who rejects the etymology from Olr. *-stāna*, which in his view can only denote a territory; in fact the suffix can have a range of meanings).
[51] For the Yezidi equivalent to these lineages see below, p. 130f.
[52] This second Heptad is thought by some communities to be opposed to the *Haftan*, while others regard them as complementary to these, see Kreyenbroek 1992: 69.
[53] See Hamzeh'ee 1991: 211-16.
[54] See Mokri 1967: 44 and in detail Van Bruinessen, forthcoming article. I am indebted to Dr Van Bruinessen for showing me the article in advance of publication.
[55] Various names are given for the other members of this group, see Kreyenbroek 1992: 69-70, 72.
[56] See Nau and Tfinkdji (1915-17: 271-2): "They say that there are seven divinities and that each rules the universe for ten thousand years... it is now the epoch of Melek Tawus; when he will have reigned for his ten thousand years, another will succeed him." Cf. Empson 1928: 89, who mentions periods of one thousand years.
[57] On the "four angels" (*cār malak*) of the Ahl-e Haqq tradition see Ivanow 1953: 43. On their links with the elements see Mokri 1967: 61, n. 47, and Kreyenbroek 1992: 69. On the Old Iranian

elements in the concepts of the Ahl-e Haqq *cār malak* see Kreyenbroek 1992: 69-70. In the Yezidi tradition the *car melek* are mentioned in T. 4. 14, 16; 5. 25; 7. 9. Some modern Yezidis are very much aware of these links between divinities and elements. Pîr Khidr Silêman, who at that time had no knowledge whatever of Zoroastrianism and cannot have realised the parallel with the beliefs of that faith, repeatedly drew my attention to them in 1992.

58 Ivanow 1953: 12; similarly Mokri 1967: 49.

59 See, e.g., Hamzeh'ee 1990: 57f.

60 On their shared veneration for Melek Tawus see above. On the taboo on words for "Satan" see also below, p. 149f. For Yezidism the *locus classicus* is Layard 1849: I. 287-8; the Yaresan taboo is mentioned by Mokri 1967: 44.

61 The role of caves in both traditions could be cited as a further point of similarity. The Yaresan also recount that Soltan Sahak and his bride spent seven days in a cave. Then the bridegroom came out, accompanied by the seven *Haftawāna*, who were indistinguishable from himself, see Kreyenbroek 1992: 71. The cave under the shrine of Sheykh Adi at Lalish is one of the most sacred places in Yezidism; see further below, p. 82f.

62 See Khwāja al-Din: 66f; Hamzeh'ee 1990: 184f, q.v. for a further discussion of the Yaresan fast.

63 For a description of such an occasion see Layard 1849: I. 292-3. These instruments came down to earth from on high just before the creation of the form of Adam, see T. 1. 33, 34. There is an Ahl-e Haqq tradition that Adam's soul came to his body through music, see Hamzeh'ee 1990: 161.

64 I.e., a ritual meal, preceded by animal sacrifice, which must be held a minimum of seventeen times a year, and which should be attended by all adult members of the group. Prayers are said, sacred texts (*kalām*) are recited to the accompaniment of music, and there is sometimes mystical dancing. See Hamzeh'ee 1990: 156-80; Khwāja al-Din: 79f.

65 As was mentioned earlier (Ch. 2, n. 74), Pîr Khidr Silêman told me about this in April 1992 without prompting (the Yaresan ceremony had, however, been mentioned several days earlier, without apparently evoking any signs of recognition). Others later confirmed his account, but no hard evidence has so far been found.

66 See Hamzeh'ee 1990: 158, and above, n. 1.

67 For the Yaresan see e.g. Khwāja al-Din: 129. In the Yezidi tradition this taboo is often said to apply to members of the 'priestly' classes (see Art. 21 of Isma'īl Beg's document, above, p. 9), notably the Qewwals (Furlani 1937: 162-3). It was usual, however, for all Yezidi men to have large moustaches, "like the Kaka'i" (PX, verbally, April 1992).

68 On the 'Brother' see the Yezidi Petition to the Ottoman government quoted above, (pp. 6-7), and further below, p. 136.

69 The institution is known as *Sharṭ wa Eqrār*. See Hamzeh'ee 1990: 222-3.

70 Usually called *sar sepordan*, "surrendering one's head (i.e., to the Pîr)", but also known as *jouz-e sar shekastan*, "breaking the nutmeg of the head", see Hamzeh'ee 1990: 200.

71 See Hamzeh'ee 1990: 201.

72 I am indebted for this information to Pîr Khidr Silêman; it was later confirmed by several Yezidis.

73 See Mokri 1967, *passim*.

74 For the Ahl-e Haqq account see Hamzeh'ee 1990: 71-2, and Mokri 1966: Pers. text 66. In the Yezidi tradition references occur in T. 7. 2; 10. 4.

75 See Lescot 1938: 57-8.

76 Siouffi 1882: 253-4; reproduced in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 243-4.

77 See Hamzeh'ee 1990: 262.

78 I.e., a small round object which, although it is itself white, appears to contain a variety of hues. The introduction of colours is mentioned as part of the process of creation in T. 1. 10, 11. On the image of the Pearl in Iranian folklore see further Mokri 1960.

[79] Ivanow 1953: 42.

[80] See Hamzeh'ee 1990: 70.

[81] Presumably by God, though this is not absolutely clear from the context, see Khwāja al-Dīn: 39. There is some evidence that a loud cry formed part of the Indo-Iranian sacrificial ritual (Kreyenbroek 1985: 164f), which may have inspired the Indo-Iranian cosmogony (see below). The Cry may therefore already have played a role in an ancient myth of the creation.

[82] At the time of the Primeval Sacrifice, God and the four highest Archangels sat on the surface of the water (Ivanow 1953: 43). These links between the original Creator and water may remind one of Varuna's connection has with that element in the Veda (see Lüders 1951, *passim*).

[83] Ivanow 1953: 47-8. Fire thus existed outside the limits of the world, and played a role in the process of creation. For a different explanation of the *Sāj-e Nār* (viz. as a mythical Tree), see Mokri 1966: 17, cf. *ibid.*, Pers. text 253f. This seems unlikely, however, in view of the description of the *Sāj* as a source of heat in the following part of the myth.

[84] Ivanow, *loc. cit.* See also Hamzeh'ee 1990: 264.

[85] Mokri 1966: Pers. text 35f, Hamzeh'ee 1990: 262f.

[86] Mokri 1967: 49.

[87] Mokri 1966: 16, Pers. text p. 54f. Another version mentions the appearance of a "roasted bull" (*gāw-e beryān)* at the time of the Covenant, see Khwāja al-Dīn: 127-8. Ivanow (1953:102) speaks of the killing and ritual consumption of a "sacrificial animal", which was one of the first creations.

[88] Ivanow 1953: 43.

[89] The translation is based on the Arabic and Kurdish versions published in Bittner 1913.

[90] Lit. "mystery".

[91] In the modern Yezidi tradition, Melek Tawus is generally believed to have been created on a Wednesday, the Yezidis' holy day. I am indebted for this information to Mr Mamou Othman of Berlin; it was confirmed by other members of the Yezidi community.

[92] So Bittner's text and other versions, e.g. Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 161; Frayha 1946: 24. This seems strange, since no such creative functions appear to be prominently attributed to Fekhr el-Dîn elsewhere in the tradition. It could be that these acts are traditionally attributed to Melek Tawus, the name of Fekhr el-Dîn being substituted here for reasons of secrecy. Guest (1987: 202) reads: "He created...".

[93] See above, Ch. 1 with nn. 108, 109.

[94] I.e., the Ark. See T. 2. 13, 14.

[95] This element is seldom mentioned in the Yezidi tradition. The reason for this may be sought in the statement in the *Jilwe*: "My wrath is directed towards those who speak of my Covenant (Ar. *mīthāq*)." See also Kreyenbroek 1992: 73.

[96] So Edmonds 1967: 4. According to others, such a conclave takes place at the feast of the New Year, see below, Ch. 6 with nn. 3, 61, 66.

[97] The later Zoroastrian tradition postulated that, before the world was created in a material form, it had existed in a "spiritual" one. This may be a later development, see Kreyenbroek, "On Spenta Mainyu's Role in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony" (forthcoming).

[98] See Anklesaria 1956 and Anklesaria 1964 respectively.

[99] GBd. 1. 44.

[100] Phl. *paymānag*. This part of the myth, which represents the only known instance of direct agreement between Ohrmazd and Ahreman, seems anomalous in the Zoroastrian tradition. It may well represent an attempt to reinterpret an older account in the light of the teachings of Zoroastrianism, see Kreyenbroek 1992: 59, n. 3.

[101] GBd. 3. 23.

[102] On the links between the sky, stone, crystal and metal see Bailey 1943: 120f; Boyce 1975: 132-3.

[103] See Bailey 1943: 135-6; Plutarch in Boyce and Grenet 1991: 458, 459. On similar beliefs in ancient India see Kirfel 1920: 7.
[104] So in GBd. 1a. 4; 3. 8. Other accounts do not mention fire in this connection (e.g. GBd. 1. 54; 1a. 13).
[105] GBd. 4. 22; Zadsp. 2. 11, 18f; 3. 1.
[106] Zadsp. 3. 77f.
[107] See Kreyenbroek 1992, 1993, and "On Spenta Mainyu's Role in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony", (forthcoming).
[108] See in particular Kreyenbroek, "On Spenta Mainyu's Role in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony".
[109] On the killing of a snake in Yezidi mythology see above, p. 48f.
[110] In the Iranian tradition Fire is considered to be the source of movement, see GBd. 1a.3; Zadsp. 3. 77f.
[111] See with references Kreyenbroek 1993: 305.
[112] See Lüders 1951-9, *passim*; Boyce 1975b.
[113] See Kreyenbroek 1993.
[114] See Kreyenbroek 1992, 1993 and "On Spenta Mainyu's Role in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony". For the links between this myth and Roman Mithraism see Kreyenbroek, "Mithra and Ahreman in Iranian Cosmogonies", (forthcoming).
[115] Ca. 559-323 BCE. See Boyce 1982: 44f, *et passim*.
[116] For the Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq traditions see the references given above.
[117] See, e.g., Dirr 1917-18: 567.
[118] The Yezidi Baba Chawûsh still wears a 'sacred girdle' (*rist*), made of wool died black with juice of the sacred *zirgûz* plant. It is said that many 'men of religion' formerly wore these (see below, Ch. 5, n. 52). Traditionally all Yezidis (or possibly males only) must wear a 'sacred' shirt; the Feqîrs' shirt differs in shape from that worn by others (Lescot 1938: 93). One of the words for this shirt is *girêvan*, cf. the Zoroastrian term *girebān*, which is used for the front pocket of their 'sacred shirt' (see Modi 1922: 182-3). The Yezidi shirt, however, has no such pocket. I am indebted to Pîr Khidr Silêman for most of the information concerning the Yezidi tradition.
[119] See Kreyenbroek, "On the Concept of Spiritual Authority in Zoroastrianism", (forthcoming).
[120] See Boyce 1982: 231f.
[121] Since the term "Mithraism" is normally associated with the Roman cult, which probably differed from the Western Iranian religion on several major points, the use of this term is avoided here.
[122] This claim is also made by Prince Mu'āwiyya Yezidi (1983, 1990).
[123] The fifth-century author Eznik of Kolb (in Zaehner 1955: 438), states that the Zoroastrians claimed that Ahreman created a peacock in order to demonstrate that he was capable of creating good things.
[124] Caves also play a role in the cult of Roman Mithraism, whose imagery and mythology appear to be inspired at least in part by the Western Iranian Cosmogony, see Kreyenbroek, "Mithra and Ahreman in Iranian cosmogonies."
[125] Browne 1902: 327.
[126] On Bābak see Browne 1902: 323f; Amoretti 1975: 505f.
[127] Browne 1902: 330; Amoretti 1975: 513.
[128] Witness, e.g., the title *Meshef Resh*, "Black Book", the Black Snake flanking the Doorway of the Shrine of Sheykh Adi, and the fact that several articles of clothing used by 'men of religion' are died black, cf. above, n. 118. Other colours, notably white, also have a prominent place in Yezidi symbolism.
[129] See Amoretti 1975: 513.
[130] As was pointed out earlier, the cultural environment in which these faiths originated appears to have had a genius for adopting alien elements and integrating these into its traditional system.

As a result, isolated elements of various origins abound in the Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq traditions. These are hardly of major significance, however, for understanding the early development of these systems.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORSHIP, SHRINES AND HOLY BEINGS

When compared with the pantheons of some other religions, the character and mutual links of the supernatural beings of Yezidism—God, members of the Heptad, and divine or saintly figures of various origins—may seem complex. The Yezidi system, in fact, shows several peculiarities which are seldom found to the same degree in other faiths. Reference has already been made to the indistinct identity of many holy beings (known in Kurdish as *khas* or *mêr*), some of whom appear to be more or less interchangeable. Another peculiarity of Yezidism is that there are considerable differences between local cults. Even a figure as prominent as Sheykh Adi, for example, does not seem to appeal to the popular imagination to the same extent in all communities. He is the subject of many legends in the Sheykhan area, but no such accounts are said to be current either in the Sinjar area or in the Jebel Sim'an.[1] In order to gain a better insight into the Yezidis' own perception of their holy figures, it is necessary to study the role they play on a practical level in the religious lives of the faithful. We shall therefore first examine the various forms of Yezidi worship, and the holy places which offer a focus for devotions. In the light of the insights derived from this, we shall return briefly to the question of the mutual links and functions of *khas*, while a more detailed survey of character and functions of individual holy beings will be given in an Appendix.

PRAYER

In the late twentieth century, individual verbal prayer does not play a prominent role

in the religious life of the Yezidi laity of the Sheykhan area, and the same is probably true of many other communities. When asked about the reasons for this, the explanation a Yezidi is most likely to give is that of progress: only traditional or very pious people still pray, while members of the community with any claim to 'modernity'—even if they observe most traditional customs at least when other Yezidis are present—tend to look on prayer as a thing of the past. While such an explanation seems plausible and is probably at least partially correct, there is evidence to suggest that the role of this personal and direct form of communication between believer and the divine was already a moderate one before there was any question of modernity. Neither Layard,[2] who wrote in the mid-nineteenth century, nor Empson[3] eighty years later, believed that individual prayer even existed in Yezidism, the only form of verbal worship they knew being the chanting of *Qewls* by trained Qewwals. Those accounts which recognise the existence of individual daily devotions in Yezidism, moreover, tend to disagree on various points, notably on the question of the actual times of prayer. Menant's account[4] (see below) claims that one act of worship a day is sufficient. Lady Drower's[5] informant told her that Yezidis pray five times a day: at dawn, sunrise, noon, in the afternoon, and at sunset.[6] Lescot, on the other hand, mentions sunrise, sunset and the rising and setting of the moon.[7] Dr. Khelîl Jindî, an educated and well-informed Yezidi, refers to three times of prayer only: sunrise, noon and sunset.[8] Elsewhere,[9] Silêman and Jindî published the texts of morning and evening prayers (reproduced and translated here as T. 6 and 7), without reference to a third time of prayer. Morning and evening, or sunrise and sunset, are in fact the times which seem to be mentioned most often by modern Yezidis when speaking of their daily prayers.

A number of texts have been published which are designated as "prayers";[10] while this constitutes further proof of the existence of verbal prayer in Yezidism—just as the conflicting statements about prayer-times indicate that such observances are hardly a central part of the religious life of the community—it should not be imagined that any given version of such texts is the universally accepted formula. Both Makas[11] and Dirr[12]—using the work of S.A. Eghiazarov,[13] which is based on the Armenian tradition—published versions of "the main Yezidi prayer" whose initial formula is roughly the same as that of the prayer given below as T. 6.1, but which otherwise correspond to the text which Silêman and Jindî refer to as the "Hymn of Melek Tawus" (T.10). The "Morning Prayer" published here (T. 6), on

the other hand, seems to derive largely from the "Hymn of Sheykh Shems" (T. 12. 8f). Furthermore, Lescot's informant[14] dictated a short prayer for protection, addressed to Sheykh Shems but showing no further resemblance to either of the others or to a known *Qewl*. He stated that such prayers could be "freely invented by anyone"[15] (meaning, presumably, any Sheykh or religious leader). Both Melek Tawus and Sheykh Shems are suitable figures to pray to. The role and functions of Melek Tawus will be explored in detail below; his image is traditionally presented to the faithful for worship each year, and he is clearly a central figure in the Yezidi Tradition. Sheykh Shems represents the Sun, which Yezidis face when praying. He is believed to go to see God three times a day to pray to him,[16] perhaps in fact conveying the prayers men have addressed to himself. All this shows that, while the contents of prayer formulas are generally appropriate to the occasion and reflect genuine beliefs, different groups of Sheykhs teach their followers different prayers, which have either been composed independently or consist of passages from the sacred texts which form the core of the Yezidi Tradition.[17] Other prayers conform to this pattern. At the *Kaniya Sipî*, the "White Spring" at Lalish, which is one of the most sacred places known to Yezidism, some believers say the following short prayer,[18] which derives in part from the "Hymn of the Faith" (see below, T. 3. 1), and implicitly describes the *Kaniya Sipî* as a symbol of the order which came to the world at Creation, finding expression in the Faith and containing remedies against all ills:

îmane bi çi nîşane
berî ne 'erd hebû ne esmane
ne çiya hebû ne sikane

rê hebû me'rifetê
îman hebû ṭerîqetê
ewê rojê ava kaniya sipî kiribû derman bi ser hemû derde

The faith, what a sign it is!
Before, there was neither earth nor heaven,
There were neither mountains nor firm ground.[19]

There came a road to knowledge;
Faith came (into the world) for the *ṭarīqa*;
That day the water of the White Spring was made a remedy for all ills.

NON-VERBAL ACTS OF DEVOTION

Verbal prayer, however, is not necessarily the most important part of a Yezidi's individual devotions. Menant's description of the daily observances of the community in fact omits any reference to it, concentrating entirely on gestures: "When a Yezidi gets up in the morning he turns towards the east and bows three times before the rising heavenly body, with his hands raised; he then kisses his nails, brings his hands to his head, and his duties are done for the whole day."[20] Apart from its omission of verbal prayer, this account is inaccurate in a number of details. Lescot[21] and Drower[22] refer to the obligation to wash one's hands and face before praying, and instead of Menant's "raised hands", Lescot states that the arms should be crossed. This is confirmed by Silêman and Jindî,[23] who further mention that the shoulders should be hunched, and the general attitude that of a poor man (viz. in the presence of a superior). Lescot's description goes on to say that, after completing the verbal part of the observance, a Yezidi kisses the the collar of his 'sacred' shirt,[24] and bows to the ground to kiss it.

The act of kissing is a far more conspicuous part of Yezidi observance than verbal prayer. Several authors mention the custom of kissing the spot on which the first rays of the sun fall in the morning;[25] respect for 'men of religion' is shown by kissing their hands;[26] one may not step on the threshold of the Sanctuary at Lalish because pilgrims habitually kiss it;[27] and one often sees Yezidis kissing various objects, such as as the whitewashed, tapering structures known as *nîshan*,[28] a number of which are found in the Lalish area. It is probably true to say that, in a non-literate culture where both image-worship and individual prayer play only a modest part in the lives of most believers, places provide the clearest focus for the devotional feelings of the community. In practice, worship ultimately addressed to a divinity or a holy figure is expressed by means of gifts—usually of money, but sometimes of animals intended for sacrifice—made to one's own Sheykh or to the guardian of a sanctuary, offered with signs of great respect and reverence. Even where there is no special reason for approaching a supernatural figure through a Sheykh, it is one of the elementary obligations of Yezidism that a believer should make regular visits to his own Sheykh and Pîr, show them respect and pay "certain dues glorified by the name of alms to the patron's eponymous ancestors".[29] In receiving such gifts, Sheykhs and Pîrs are held to represent the holy figures from whom their lineage claims descent (see further Ch. 5). In a sense, both shrines and

'men of religion' thus act as intermediaries between the devotee and the ultimate object of his worship. In many places the house of a Sheykh, though not regarded as a shrine, can function in a similar manner. Menant states that the houses of Yezidi Sheykhs fulfil the role of temples or mosques.[30] In Sinjar, according to Lescot, the house of the Sheykh is the centre of activities on festive occasions.[31] In Armenia it was apparently the Sheykh's hearthfire[32] that was felt to have the properties usually associated with shrines: "The Sheykhs' hearthfires fulfil the role of temples. They are holy places, each of which heals a certain illness."[33]

PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE

In other areas, curative powers of the kind described above are attributed to certain places of pilgrimage. They are usually thought to derive from the powers of a holy figure associated with that place, which is normally guarded by the Sheykhs or Pîrs of his lineage who receive pious gifts from the pilgrims. In some cases all members of such a group possess the original saint's powers; each Sheykh of the Sheykh Mend clan, for example, is believed to be capable of handling snakes with impunity and heal those who have been bitten, while Pîrs descended from Pîr Jerwan have similar powers with respect to scorpions. It is no exaggeration to say that, while vague or diverging stories are commonly told about the more general characteristics of holy figures, accounts of their curative powers as manifested in a given place of pilgrimage are usually clear and unanimous (see Appendix). A summary of the work of Ishak of Bartella gives the following account of the Yezidi views on healing:[34]

> When Christians are ill, they immediately send for able doctors; as for us, our remedies consist in praying to our prophets and men of religion... for example, one who has fever goes forthwith to pray at Sitt Nefîse, which is a fig-tree in the village of Ba'shîqe, or he goes to entreat... a mulberry in the village of Karabak; whoever has a yellow face goes to Kanî Zerka, i.e., the spring of the yellow ones... Thus we have ways of healing all illnesses... even fatal illnesses. We begin by giving alms to the poor; then, if the illness does not cease, we go to pray to our Sheykhs and to our Kocheks[35] who live in the village of the Qewwals and who have the power of removing and chasing off any illness they wish...

As is shown by the above passage, Yezidi places of pilgrimage can be of

various kinds. They may be the actual tomb of a holy man, a building dedicated to him,[36] or a tree, stone or cave which is usually—though not always—associated with a known saintly figure.[37] A building is often erected near objects of worship of the latter kind.[38] At one place in Sinjar, offerings to Melek Tawus are thrown into a secret cleft in the rocks, usually to propitiate the Evil Eye.[39] It is sometimes said that, just as the earth as a whole became settled when Lalish came down from on high (T. 1. 27-8), the area where a holy place stands became firmly established when God placed the shrine there.[40] The localised character of Yezidi worship is reflected by the shapes and names of such shrines. In Sheykhan and Sinjar shrines normally have whitewashed, conical spires and are dedicated to well-known Yezidi *khas*, whereas those of Syria have rounded domes, and many have names unknown to other Yezidi communities.[41] In some cases, a name originally associated with the locality may come to be regarded as that of the genius of the place. This is illustrated by the following account of a Yezidi lady showing a researcher a holy cave (Ar. *kahf*):[42] "'This,' she said, 'is Kaf.'...I am certain, however, that to Sitt Gulé, whose native language is Kurdish, Kaf is the name of the genius of the place. She pointed out his image to me."[43] This suggests of course that in some cases the quality of holiness or of possessing miraculous powers is primarily associated with places, the link with an individual *khas* being perceived somewhat vaguely. The specific practices associated with some individual shrines,[44] especially in connection with healing, also suggest that the power of holy places can be invoked more or less magically through certain acts. Earth from a shrine, moreover, frequently plays a role in healing practices, while *berat*, little balls of dust from the sanctuary of Sheykh Adi mixed with water from the *Kaniya Sipî*, are revered objects which Yezidis often have with them.[45] At the shrine of Sheykh Shems at Lalish, pilgrims are given a spoonful of earth or dust tied into a bit of material, which is handed to them by the guardian with a benediction (see further below). The earth, it seems, symbolises the power of the place.

LOCAL COMMUNAL ACTS OF DEVOTION[46]

Not all sanctuaries are credited with spectacular powers. Most Yezidi villages have a shrine, and many of these seem to function chiefly as visible symbols of the religious life of the community. In Sheykhan such shrines usually form the central

point of the village festivals called *ṭiwaf*;[47] every village which has a shrine holds an annual *ṭiwaf* in the name of the holy figure to which it is dedicated.[48] Although the festival is dedicated to a *khas*, and religious rites—such as singing *qewls* and playing the sacred instruments, *def* and *shibab*[49]—form part of the proceedings,[50] the main features of these events are a festive atmosphere, dancing, and communal meals. Guests come from surrounding villages and even from farther afield, and the villagers generally take great pride in their festival, feeling that it symbolises the identity and prosperity of the community. Many Yezidi communities which were forced in the 1980s to leave their original villages and settle elsewhere continue to hold the *ṭiwaf* of their original village even if their new place of residence has a *ṭiwaf* of its own, so that the memory of the old village will be kept alive.[51]

While in the case of the *ṭiwaf* religious and social elements are inextricably interwoven, an event in village life which has more pronouncedly devotional aspects is the advent of the Qewwals, who traditionally come to give the villagers an opportunity to worship an image of Melek Tawus.[52] Badger describes the arrival of the image as follows:[53]

> Having heard that the Melek Taoos... was to be exhibited in the village, we made every effort to learn all particulars respecting it... On arriving at the outskirts of the village, we heard the sound of music, and hastening to the spot from whence it came, we saw the procession slowly advancing, but no sooner did they catch a glimpse of our party than they hid the *Senjak*.[54] The harsh and deafening noise of the pipes and tambourines still went on, however... Two *Peers* preceded the bearer of the sacred cock, carrying burning censers in their hands which they waved to and fro, filling the air with the odour of incense. As they passed along the bystanders bowed themselves in adoration, uttering some indistinct sentences the meanwhile, and immersed their hands in the smoke with which they perfumed their arms and faces. The *Senjak* was then carried to the house of the old *Kiahya*,[55] or head, of the village... where it remained for two days, during which all profane festivities were suspended... Being still anxious to penetrate into the mystery of this sacred symbol, we solicited Sheykh Nâsir to allow us to see it, which, after much ado, he finally promised... At the end of the appartment on a raised platform, was the famous *Senjak*, which we were permitted to examine as near as we chose. The figure is that of a bird, more resembling a cock than any other fowl... This is fixed on the top of a candlestick, round which are two lamps, placed one above the other, and each containing seven burners... Close by the stand was a copper jug, filled with water, which we understood was dealt out to be drunk by the sick and afflicted.[56] A *Fakîr* was in the room relating all the benefits that had been

> conferred on Christians and Muhammedans, as well as on Yezeedees, by the contributions to the *Senjak*, and calling on all present to give liberally to the same object... The honour of entertaining the sacred symbol is accorded to the highest bidder... The successful competitor having made all the necessary preparations, the cock is set up at the end of a room, and covered with white cloth, underneath which is a plate to receive the subscriptions. At a given signal all rise up, each approaches the Senjak, bows before it, and throws his contribution into the plate. On returning to his place, each worships the image several times, and strikes his breast, as if to propitiate the favour of the much dreaded principle.

The accuracy of this account is confirmed by a recent work by Pîr Khidr Silêman,[57] who draws attention to further social and religious aspects of this institution. A group of 'men of religion', bearing the authority of the highest religious and secular leaders of the faith, was eminently qualified to arbitrate in questions which villagers could not settle themselves, from feuds between villages to problems concerning marriages.[58] They could, moreover, inform the leadership of the community of any serious problems they might have learned of during their tours. The communal worship of the image of Melek Tawus, moreover, is followed by a solemn sermon (*mishabet*) by the leading Qewwal. These sermons usually include such topics as God's infinite knowledge—some of which the Qewwals are about to impart to the faithful—the need to know God and to praise the holy beings who protect the Yezidis, and the obligation to lead a moral life, devoted to God and free from envy and greed. This is followed by reminders of man's mortality, the Last Day and the Judgement of the soul.[59] During the sermon, the congregation must sit silently and without movement.[60] After its formal conclusion,[61] the *def* and *shibab* are brought in, and a *sema'* ensues, i.e., a session of *qewl*-singing and increasingly ecstatic sacred music. During the *sema'* Êzîd, Melek Tawus and the seven Great Angels are loudly invoked.[62] At the end of the session, some water from the *Kaniya Sipî* is sprinkled on the head of each participant, with the words, "Oh Yezidis, this is the water of the Kaniya Sipî, it is the cup of Êzîd..."[63]

The latter formula, and also the distribution of holy liquid to the members of a congregation, are somewhat reminiscent of a ritual described by Père Anastase:[64]

> The Yezidis of the village of Khaltar near Diyarbakir have a custom which resembles our Eucharist. It is that, while they are gathered round the table, the religious leader among them takes a cup filled with wine. The communicants

> ask, "What is it?" He responds, "This is the cup of Jesus," and continues, "Jesus is present in it." After the leader has drunk, he lets the cup go round among the participants and each drinks from it, until it comes to the last one, who empties it.

There appear to be no published accounts of similar practices elsewhere. If the description is accurate, the references to Jesus could be explained as deriving from intensive contacts with Christian communities.[65] The practice of holding a communal gathering in which drinking (and possibly eating) plays a role, is reminiscent of the *jam'* ceremony of the Ahl-e Haqq (see Ch. 3). As was mentioned above, it is sometimes claimed that the Yezidis formerly held similar gatherings every Wednesday in the house of the local Mijêwir. Although the evidence is scarcely strong enough to be regarded as proof, it seems possible that the rite described by Anastase represents a 'Christianised' version of a ritual that was once practised more widely by Yezidis.

THE VALLEY OF LALISH AND ITS SHRINES

The centre of the devotional life of the Yezidi community as a whole is the Valley of Lalish, the "site of Truth" (T. 1. 22), which was brought down from on high at the last stage of the Creation (T. 1. 28-9; 2. 22), and where the shrine of Sheykh Adi is located surrounded by the sanctuaries of other holy beings. Empson,[66] whose knowledge of Yezidism derived from personal observation, remarks that "nearly every thought and activity centres on the shrine of Sheykh Adi." al-Maqrīzī[67] asserted that the tomb of Sheykh Adi was the direction of prayer of the early community, which may explain the text of the "Declaration of Faith" (T. 8. 2).[68] Modern Yezidis, however, regard the sun as their only *qibla*, and the statement is now probably understood as reflecting the position of Lalish as the heart of the religious universe of Yezidism. Yezidi prayers and hymns frequently contain references to such notable features of Lalish as the 'Twin Spires' of Sheykh Adi, the *Kaniya Sipî*, the Cave, the Cavern, the Zemzem spring (T. 8. 5), the Silat Bridge (T. 7. 6; on all these places see below), and also to others (T. 9. 44, 45, 46). Yezidis everywhere are thus constantly reminded of these sacred places which they should, moreover, ideally visit each year at the time of the Feast of the Assembly (see below, Ch. 6). *Berat* brought home from a pilgrimage are treated with reverence by Yezidis from Armenia to Germany, and pilgrims take home

quantities of berries, leaves and fruit from the trees of the Valley. These have the status of *simaṭ*, i.e., sacred or ritual food.[69]

In view of the pre-eminent status of Lalish, a description of the place cannot be omitted here. The following survey, however, which is based on the scant accounts in the existing literature and on my field-notes—which were often jotted down in the middle of raging debates among informants as to the true significance of the place in question, which did not always reach a conclusion—cannot claim to be in any way complete or indeed invariably accurate.

Sheykh Adi is located in a wooded valley, approximately two miles long, in the mountains north of Mosul.[70] It is surrounded by three mountains: Mt Hezret, roughly to the west of Lalish, Mt 'Erefat to the north,[71] and Mt Meshêt (Kurd. *Meşêt*) to the south. There are two main approaches to the Valley. One is a footpath leading through the mountains from Ba'drê. During festivals pilgrims fire their rifles and kiss a stone on this path at the point where Lalish is first sighted. This is called the "place of greeting" (*Silavgeh*). Also on Mt Meshêt, somewhat to the east of the *Silavgeh*, is the "Assembly of Sheykh Adi" (*Dîwana Sheykh Adi*). It is said to consist of a round structure, with a doorway to the east and a spring inside. According to legend, Sheykh Adi and his companions used to sit there in a circle, to listen to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī preaching in distant Baghdad.[72]

The other approach to Lalish is from the east, where there is a good road into the Valley. The first landmark on this road, coming from the direction of Atrush, is the ruin of a caravanseray which is known as "the house of Êzîd" (*Khana Êzî*). The building probably served travellers in days gone by. Higher up on Mt 'Erefat is a sacred spring, the *Kanî Baykî*, which Sheykh Adi is believed to have brought forth by beating his stick against the rock. The place is thought to have curative powers. Further along the road there is a place where arriving Qewwals ritually cleanse themselves.[73] Next, pilgrims come to a small, white stone bridge over a stream, known as the *Pira Silat*,[74] which apparently represents the demarcation-line between the profane and the sacred. Formerly all pilgrims washed their hands, faces and necks here,[75] took off their shoes and solemnly crossed the bridge three times, clapping their hands and saying, "The Silat Bridge, on one side is hell, on the other paradise."[76] Now only a few traditional groups still observe this custom. After this, pilgrims used to go on barefoot to the sanctuary, passing groves of olive and *zirgûz*[77] trees on the way.

When approaching the upper part of the Valley, where most buildings are found, one first sees the two great conical spires (*qubbe* or *qubb*) of Sheykh Adi, each crowned by two gilded globes (*hilêl*),[78] to which vanes are usually attached.[79] These two spires are erected over the tombs of Sheykh Adi and Sheykh Hesen. There is a third, smaller *qubbe* over the tomb of Sheykh Obekr, which is located in the same sanctuary.[80] The shrine of Sheykh Shems, near Sheykh Adi, has another major *qubbe*. Most lesser sanctuaries have the shape of simple, flat-roofed houses with a door in the middle, and usually with a portico. In the case of shrines dedicated to the eponyms of a lineage, portraits of deceased followers of Sheykhs or Pîrs belonging to this family are usually found on the wall around the entrance. At times of pilgrimage, a representative of the lineage acts as guardian of the shrine, receiving pilgrims.[81] A pilgrimage consists of approaching the shrine, greeting the guardian with great respect, kissing the threshold of the shrine, leaving some money there, and briefly stepping inside. Then one departs with the blessing of the guardian, which can either be perfunctory or formal and elaborate.[82]

It would be inaccurate to say that the nearest Yezidi equivalent to canonisation is to have a shrine at Lalish. Some saints are only venerated locally[83] and have no shrine there, while others whose popularity is more widespread are worshipped exclusively in a shrine elsewhere. A figure like Dawûd, moreover, who undoubtedly has a place among the major *khas* of Yezidism,[84] appears to have no shrine at all. Still, a considerable number of prominent holy figures have sanctuaries in the Lalish Valley. On a tour of the Valley, beginning high up on Mt 'Erefat and ending on the opposite slope of Mt Meshêt, the following holy places were pointed out to me.

A *nîshan*, usually referred to as *Chiyayê 'Erefat*, or "Mount 'Erefat". By putting one's ear against this one can hear a faint sound of running water, which is felt to be significant. Yezidi visitors generally kiss the *nîshan*. Some claim that a "Black Stone" is hidden under this structure, or under a similar one nearby.[85]

The shrines of Alû Bekr and Mem Shivan.[86] Mem Shivan is moreover credited with establishing the nearby "Wishing Pillar" (*stûna miraza*),[87] a pillar in a cave-like structure around which visitors put their arms to make a wish.[88] Then come the shrines of Pîr Êsîbiya, Sheykh Babik, Sheykh Ṭokel, Pîr Jerwan, Sheykh Obekr, and Sheykh Sheref el-Dîn. The next *mezar* is dedicated to Êzî or Sultan Êzîd, whom my informants emphatically identified with Melek Tawus; the shrine does

not look particularly distinguished, and during the Festival of the Assembly of 1992 neither a guardian nor pilgrims were in evidence. Further on, one passes the shrines of Sheykh 'Ebd el-Qadir el-Reḥmanî and Meḥmed Reben before reaching the complex of Sheykh Adi, which will be described in detail below.

Beyond Sheykh Adi, on the other side of the main road, is the building erected over the *Kaniya Sipî*. The spring is so sacred that traditional Yezidis object to aliens setting foot inside the building.[89] Children are baptised here,[90] and the place is venerated by all pilgrims. There is an open space in front of the building where dancing often takes place during festivals. Another feature of the *Kaniya Sipî* area is a fallen tree-trunk named *Dara Khewa*, or "Tree of Sleep". A piece of wood from this tree, when tied around a child's neck, will help it to sleep.

A little higher up on Mt Meshêt is the shrine of Sheykh Shems, the second most important shrine of Lalish. Except for its *qubbe*, the sanctuary is structurally similar to most others. The large numbers of pilgrims, however, and the fact that one has to climb a long and steep flight of steps to reach it, enhance the air of sanctity of the place. During the Festival of the Assembly the bull-sacrifice is made here (see Ch. 6), and sacrificial animals seem to be donated to this shrine more often than to others.

There follow the shrines of Sheykh Isma'îl; Ḥajjî 'Elî, whose help is invoked in cases of madness or possession by *jinns*; Sheykh Baba Dîn; Sheykh Amadîn; Sheykhalê Shems; Khatûna Fekhre; the "Cave of Sheykh Mend", a building which allegedly contains a cave where many snakes live; a shrine dedicated jointly to 'Ezra'îl and Jibra'îl; one for "Sheykh Ḥesen and his brother, Melek Sheykh Ḥesen"; and one for Meḥmed Reshan.[91] By the main road in the Valley, opposite Sheykh Adi, is the shrine of Sheykh Mushelleḥ,[92] who is "the Guardian of the Road".[93] On arrival at Lalish, pilgrims first come here to give donations. A building dedicated to the *Chil Mêran*, the "Forty (Holy) Men", is found in the same area.[94] Several other shrines are mentioned in the sources.[95]

The Shrine of Sheykh Adi

In front of the actual Sanctuary of Sheykh Adi there is a large square which during festivals is usually thronged with pilgrims, and which once served as a market place. In the wall around part of the square[96] there is a row of recesses which were used as shops. This is known as "the market of mystical knowledge" (*sûqa*

me'rifetê, see T. 7. 10). Directly in front of the door leading to the forecourt of the Sanctuary, there is a *nîshan* dedicated to Sheykh Mend.[97] The doorway itself is known as *Derî Mîr*.[98] Formerly, 'men of religion'—or perhaps the whole community—used to gather here in the dawn to pray facing the rising sun (T. 9. 22).[99] Pilgrims usually kiss the threshold of the doorway.

On the evenings before Wednesdays and Fridays, and every evening during festivals, small lights are lit on patches of some inflammable substance daubed on walls and *nîshans* all over the Valley. Seven lights on the wall next to the doorway are said to be for the seven Great Angels.[100] A number of tiles with carved symbols which formerly decorated the inner wall of the Sanctuary[101] are now found on the outer wall (for a description see below). In the forecourt of the Sanctuary[102] there are special places for the Prince and the Pêshîmam,[103] and "the north-western corner of the court is fenced off from the rest by two low walls and shaded by a trellis of climbing vines to form the Parlour of Farkhadīn, reserved for his descendant, the Bābā Shaykh."[104] In the middle of the court there is a cistern (*Kaniya Kelokê*), and another source of water which is said to come directly from the *Hewdê Naṣir el-Dîn* inside the Sanctuary. On the southern side of the court there is a store-room for *simaṭ*. The house of the Baba Chawûsh, known as *Shehsiwar*, forms part of its eastern boundary.[105] The doorway of the Sanctuary (*Qapiya Sheykh Adî*) is situated near the north-eastern corner of the Forecourt. It is now flanked only by the great Black Snake, but an older source gives the following description:[106]

> The door of the Temple, which is on the left of the west[107] wall, is interesting on account of the symbolic engravings cut on the portico, including crude peacocks, crescents, stars, hatchets and combs. (A hatchet forms part of the Mîr's insignia when fully arrayed for performing religious rites,[108] and a comb is supposed to guard against witches by entangling their hair.[109]) To the right of the doorway... is cut a large black figure of a serpent, showing up clearly on the white masonry. Prior to 1892, when the Temple was sacked, a seven-branched sceptre was carved on the wall to the right of the serpent.

Edmonds, whose work is based on notes taken between 1930 and 1945, gives the following description:[110]

> Both above the door and on the wall to the right of the snake are carved a

> number of curious designs including two birds which I could not identify, sun, moon and stars within a circle, other circles decorated internally which they call "shields", a comb, something that looked like a pierced ladle, and a crook.[111]

The "circles" mentioned by Edmonds were still in place in 1992; they are part of a relief located directly over the door into the Sanctuary, which is set in a recess a little inside the portal.[112] On a pediment over the front of the portal there is an intricate relief representing two lions facing each other, flanked on either side by a peacock carrying a chick on its back. Between the two sets of lions and peacocks there is a stylised representation of two *hilêl*.

Pilgrims usually kiss the threshold of the *Qapiya Sheykh Adî* and give donations to the guardians, who are posted here on festive occasions and who accompany pilgrims who come to visit the shrine at other times. The portal leads into the main hall of the Sanctuary, a dark and venerable space with five impressive pillars, a number of chandeliers and other lights, and various ornaments. Near the portal there is a cistern known as *Ḥewdê Naṣir el-Dîn*. According to legend the angel of that name—a member of the Heptad who is also the angel of death—comes to clean his knife here whenever a person dies anywhere in the world. A little further on there is a niche where a *senjaq* is said to be kept behind a curtain.[113] At the far end of the hall, one turns into a chamber which contains the tomb of Sheykh Hesen; this gives onto the larger chapel where Sheykh Adi is buried. Pilgrims walk three times around this tomb, and tie a knot in one of the colourful pieces of cloth which cover it. Beyond this chamber there is a large, cavernous space where the olive oil from the sacred groves is kept in two rows of large jars. In the cavern beyond this, pilgrims throw handkerchiefs at a place on the wall, with the words *Ya Sheykh Adî*. Elsewhere in the same space there are two holes in the rock into which pilgrims put their hands down to the wrists, saying the words "heaven, hell" (*behisht, dozhe*) three times. The rather neglected tomb of Sheykh Obekr is also located in this area. Another hall, the "*Heywan* of Sheref el-Dîn", is reached from the chamber of Sheykh Hesen.[114]

A flight of steps, hidden by an inconspicuous door in the chamber of Sheykh Hesen, leads to the Cave,[115] one of the most sacred places of Yezidism. Many Yezidis strongly object to aliens visiting the Cave, and it is seldom mentioned in the literature.[116] The Cave is dark and very small. It contains a niche with light, fed with oil from the sacred groves. One is reminded here of the text of the famous

'Light-verse' of the *Qur'ān* (24. 35), where God's Light is said to be "like a niche in wall, in which a lamp is placed... it is lighted with the oil of a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor the West." A remarkable synthesis thus seems to have been achieved between ancient Iranian[117] and Islamic symbolism. From the Cave a narrow passage leads to the larger Cavern,[118] through which flows the water of Zemzem spring. This sacred spring is thought to come directly from its namesake in Mecca because of a miraculous act by Sheykh Adi. A Hymn describing this miracle (T. 16) also links Sheykh Adi with another rite connected with the Cavern, viz. that of rubbing one's back against a place in the wall.[119]

A small door leads out of the Cavern into the open air. Near this door—more or less beside the Zemzem spring but on the other side of the wall—is a place known as *gay-kuzhî*, "bull-killing", where bulls are said to be sacrificed. However, the great bull-sacrifice during the Festival of the Assembly takes place at the shrine of Sheykh Shems, and my informants could give no definite information as to the occasions when this place was used for such a purpose.[120] The close proximity of spring and sacrificial place may, however, be significant. In the same area, there are a number of stables and store-rooms, including one where *berat* are kept.

Different parts of the roof of the Sanctuary are thought of as separate areas, and are known by different names. The area directly above the Cave is called *Bana Kafê* (see T. 9. 44), and that above the Doorway is referred to as *Bana Qapî*. Edmonds[121] states that the entire roof is known as "the roof of Shaykh Assin" (i.e., Sheykh Hesen), but strictly speaking the name probably denotes only the area surrounding the *qubbe* devoted to that Sheykh.

ON THE HOLY BEINGS

The individual character and functions of many Yezidi holy figures are less well-defined than those of their counterparts in most other religions. While the structure of many myths and legends of Islamic, Judaeo-Christian and pre-Islamic Iranian origin can still be discerned in the Yezidi tradition,[122] one can often only guess who was the original protagonist. The Appendix, describing the individual characteristics of the most prominent holy figures, shows that relatively few traits are attributed to one figure only. One reason for the Yezidis' apparent vagueness in such matters can be sought in the fact that, in practical terms, they normally approach God through a Sheykh who in turn represents a *khas* or angel.[123] All

holy beings are thus regarded as representatives of the Divine which, in the minds of believers, presumably limits the relevance of their individual personalities. This blurring of identities is especially evident in cases where the symbolic significance of two or more figures is similar. Melek Tawus, Êzîd and Sheykh Adi, for instance—leading Beings who are all to some extent representative of the Yezidi faith—share several, though not all, of their epithets and functions. The process of semi-identification is facilitated further by the use of such epithets as "King", "Sultan", "Lord", or "Prince", which are employed more or less indiscriminately for various holy figures, and also for God himself (see Appendix). Such considerations may also help to explain the tendency to attribute traits or functions which originally probably belonged to God only, to beings who—in terms of Aristotelian logic—cannot be identical with Him.

The Yezidi tradition thus contains many statements which may appear puzzling to researchers trained to regard the validity of distinctions as the basis of all analytical argument. However, they clearly reflect the the insights of composers who recognised an undivided divine force, expressing itself in various phenomena whose seemingly distinctive characteristics are of no great significance in terms of ultimate reality. This characteristic approach to religious truth is more easily understood when viewed in the context of the practicalities of Yezidi observance.

Notes

[1] Lescot 1938: 67.
[2] Layard 1849: I. 305.
[3] Empson 1928: 78.
[4] Menant 1892: 116.
[5] Drower 1941: 293.
[6] He added that prayers are necessary before eating; such a custom is otherwise unknown.
[7] Lescot 1938: 69-70.
[8] Cf. the belief that Sheykh Shems goes to pray to God in the morning, at noon and in the evening, see p. 71 with n. 16 and Lescot 1938: 66, n. 2.
[9] Silêman and Jindî 1979: 27-31.
[10] Kurd. *du'a, nivêj.*
[11] Makas 1900: 31f.
[12] Dirr 1917-18: 558f.
[13] S.A. Eghiazarov (1891), "Kratkij etnograficheskij ocherk kurdov erivanskoj gubernii", *Zapiski kavkazskago otdela imperatorskago russkago geograficheskago obshchestva*, Bd. 13,Vypusk 2, Tbilisi.
[14] Lescot 1938: 70.
[15] *Ibid.*, n. 1.
[16] See Lescot 1938: 66, n. 2. The account of Sheykh Shems' three visits to God was confirmed independently by Pîr Khidr Silêman in March 1992.
[17] In T. 6. 1, e.g., Sheykh Shems is mentioned twice in a what appears to be an enumeration of members of the Heptad, whereas no such anomalies occur in the introductory passages of the prayers published by Makas and Dirr (see above). There can be little doubt that the text published here reflects the preoccupations of priests who have a special interest in the cult of Sheykh Shems.
[18] Written down by Pîr Khidr Silêman at Lalish on 29 March 1992.
[19] Kurd. *sikan* "anything fixed" (PX, verbally, March 1992).
[20] Menant 1892: 116.
[21] Lescot 1938: 69-70.
[22] Drower 1941: 293.
[23] Silêman and Jindî 1979: 27.
[24] On which see above, p. 60. The term "sacred shirt" is commonly used for the Zoroastrian counterpart of this garment.
[25] Layard 1849: I, 301; Badger 1852: 126; Empson 1928: 84.
[26] See Art. 4 of the 1872 Petition discussed above, p. 6f.
[27] On the origins of this reverence for thresholds see above, Ch. 3, n. 1.
[28] These objects have rounded tops and are usually under a metre high. There is one, called *nîshana Sheykh Mend* ("the sign of Sheykh Mend"), on the square in front of the main Sanctuary of Lalish; another, simply known as *Chiyayê 'Erefat*, "Mount 'Erefat", is located high up on the hill of that name. The word *nîshan*, lit. "sign" or "proof" (viz of supernatural power), is in fact used by the Yezidis of Sheykhan for any holy place, from the structures mentioned here to shrines and springs of water. Lady Drower (1941: 27), who spoke Arabic with her informants, mentions the use of the word *mazār* (Kurd. *mezar)* in the same sense. Lescot (1938: 78) mentions the terms *ziyaret* and *lalish* for "shrine".
[29] Edmonds 1967: 7.
[30] Menant 1892: 114.
[31] Lescot (1938: 87) speaks of "walking around the Sheykh's house" (similarly al-Damlūjī 1949: 199). This is intriguing, since the custom of walking around an object as a sign of worship is attested in the Avesta (*Yasht* 11. 7, see Kreyenbroek 1985: 63). During the Festival of the

Assembly, a procession of 'men of religion' solemnly walks three times around the Forecourt of Sheykh Adi as part of the official ritual (see below, p. 152, and cf. Edmonds 1967: 13, whose remarks, however, seem to refer to a procession around the "village"). Also, pilgrims walk three times around the tomb of Sheykh Adi. However, Pîr Khidr Silêman informs me that no such observance forms part of *ṭiwaf* in the Sheykhan, and it may be that the above statement is based on a literal translation of the Ar. term *ṭawāf*, "circumambulation", which in a Yezidi context may signify no more than "performing the proper rites". On the Yezidi festivals called *ṭiwaf* see p. 74f.

32 The role of the hearth-fire is illustrated, moreover, by the use of the word *ojaġ*, lit. "hearth", for a 'priestly' lineage. If such a family has no descendants, its hearth-fire is said to have gone out (*kor-ojaġ bû*, see Silêman 1985: 52).

33 Dirr: 1917-18: 569.

34 Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 263.

35 On this group and their powers see further below, pp. 134-5.

36 Some of these buildings, such as a small shrine at Memê Shivan in the Sheykhan area, have a pair of gazelle's horns mounted over the doorway. I was told that this is done to protect the place against wild animals, which may not be the original reason. It seems that such horns were formerly found even on private houses (PX).

37 See e.g. Drower 1941: 27.

38 See Lescot 1938: 79.

39 Empson 1928: 52-3.

40 Lescot 1938: 78.

41 Lescot 1938: 79-80.

42 Drower 1941: 550.

43 The only image known to Yezidism is that of a bird representing Melek Tawus. The cave in question, however, contained carved panels whose subjects have no obvious connection with Yezidism, and it is possible that the lady identified one of these with "Kaf".

44 Edmonds (1967: 74) describes the rites of the sanctuary of Melek Mîran near Ba'shîqe, which cures rheumatism. Sufferers take some earth from the sanctuary, go down to a stream, whose water they mix with the earth, rubbing the mud on their stomachs. They then tie a tassel of their head-dress to a nearby oleander shrub. When approaching the shrine of Sheykh Bako at Beḥzanê for curing fever, one ties a bit of material to a fig tree and feeds the fish in the spring (Furlani 1936: 70). In the case of the Kanî Zerka, which cures jaundice (see above), the patients swim in the water (Furlani 1936: 75).

45 These objects have a social as well as a religious significance. If a reconciliation has been achieved between two feuding parties, they formally exchange *berat*, the little balls of dust from Lalish; if one party later demands his *berat* back, this means that hostilities are to be resumed (Silêman 1985: 37).

46 For observances in which all Yezidis participate, such as the major feasts, see below, Ch. 6.

47 On the term, which derives from Ar. *ṭawāf*, which is used for the circumambulation of the Ka'ba, see also above, n. 31.

48 So Silêman (1985: 15), who states that Yezidi communities in Sinjar, Turkey, Syria and Armenia do not hold a *ṭiwaf* in the same manner as those of Sheykhan.

49 Edmonds (1967: 75), describing a *ṭiwaf*, says: "The Yazīdis had been busy all night with their mysteries in the sanctuary." This is reminiscent of Layard's words concerning the Festival of the Assembly at Lalish (Layard 1849: I. 294): "Some ceremony took place before I joined the assembly at the tomb, at which no stranger can be present, nor could I learn its nature from the Cawals." If such ceremonies exist, however, the Yezidis have continued to keep silence on the subject, and no further information could be found.

50 See the description of *ṭiwaf* in Silêman 1985: 14-26, and al-Damlūjī 1949: 199.

51 I am indebted for this information to Ms F. Christine Allison.

52 I have not been able to find reliable information concerning current practice as far as showing

the images of Melek Tawus is concerned. Four of the seven original images are still in the possession of the Yezidis (Silêman 1985: 31f); moreover, replicas of these venerable objects are said to be used when the Qewwals go on tour (Lescot 1938: 75, n. 1). There would appear to be no reason, therefore, why the traditional observance should not continue. A possible reason for the vagueness of my informants may have been that, because of the current precarious military and political situation, few such tours are made at all now.

53 Badger 1852: 122-6.

54 I.e., "banner", another word for the image; see Lescot 1938: 73, n. 5.

55 Sic. Presumably for *kedxûda*.

56 This was presumably water from the *Kaniya Sipî*, cf. p. 80. Note, moreover, the association of holy objects with healing.

57 Silêman 1985: 27-43.

58 On the mediating functions of religious figures in Kurdistan see Van Bruinessen 1992: 246f, *et passim*.

59 Some of the words given here are those of our T. 17. 2-3.

60 Only the Mijêwir, the religious leader of the local community and guardian of the shrine, should show his approbation at intervals by exclaiming "Yes!". The reciting Qewwal responds with the words, "May God increase your mystical knowledge and that of those present and those who are listening" (Silêman 1985: 40).

61 I.e., when the Qewwal says, "We are deficient, God is perfect; (God's) mercy on the mothers and fathers of those who are listening, on the Yezidis of the East and West, and on any person who wishes for the good of humanity" (Silêman 1985: 40).

62 A good description of a *sema'* is found in Layard 1849: I, 293.

63 Silêman 1985: 41-2.

64 Anastase 1899: 309, quoted in Makas 1900: 48. Empson (1928: 55) has a similar story about the Khalitiyye tribes, who live in the neighbourhood of Diyarbakir; the reference is thus presumably to the same group. Several accounts suggest that there is something unusual about the Khalitiyye tribes. According to Empson (1928: 55), another branch of this tribe does not practise circumcision. During a discussion on Zoroastrianism in March 1992, Pîr Khidr Silêman told me that, only a century ago, the Khalitiyye had been "Zoroastrians".

65 Note, moreover, the similarity between the names "Êzî" and "İsa".

66 Empson 1928: 79.

67 See above, p. 34f.

68 al-Maqrīzī's evidence may reflect a stage when the community at Lalish met every morning on the square to the west of the Sanctuary. They would thus have faced both the rising sun and the twin spires. Empson (1928: 54), curiously remarks that the *qibla* of the Yezidis is "the Pole Star".

69 Information from Chîcho, October 1992. The term *simaţ* is also used for ritual or festive meals, see Silêman 1985: 19.

70 Empson 1928: 112: "Latitude N. 37° 46' and Longitude E. 43° 18' at about 3,100 feet above sea-level."

71 According to Edmonds (1967: 10), the northern mountain ridge as a whole is called Ziyaret, 'Erefat being "a minor feature above the shrine".

72 See Frank 1911: 86, who states that Sheykh Adi drew a circle on the earth and sat inside it together with his disciples. Pîr Khidr Silêman, to whom I am indebted for the information concerning the *Dîwan*, said that Sheykh Adi and his companions had sat there "when the Sheykh came from Baghdad", probably a popular, simplified version of the original tale.

73 Chîcho called the place *Geliya Qewwalan*, "Gully of the Qewwals", stating that Qewwals normally go to urinate there, and to wash themselves before approaching the Sanctuary. Layard (1849: I. 280, 287) mentions men and women performing ablutions in separate places along this stream.

74 The word *silat* is presumably the Kurdish equivalent of Ar. *Ṣirāṭ*, i.e., the bridge between this world and the hereafter (so al-Damlūjī 1949: 203). However, the word also resembles the Kurdish pronunciation of Ar. *ṣalāt*, "prayer".

75 Saying: *Ya Xudê, ya Êzda, ya Ṭawûsê Melek, ya Şêxadî, tu gunehêd me daqûtî, tu ḥeca me qebûl kî*, "Oh God, oh Divine One, oh Melek Tawus, oh Sheykh Adi, wipe out our sins, accept our pilgrimage." As a ritual on behalf of absent friends or relatives, one may splash some water from the stream in one's face, saying, *sela birayê min (bavê min), sela hemû Êzdiyêd şerq û şam*, i.e., approximately, "Bless my brother ('my father') [i.e., the absent person], bless all Yezidis of East and West" (PX, verbally March 1992).

76 *Pira Silate, aliyek doje, êk cennete* (PX, verbally, March 1992).

77 The *zirgûz* produces a black dye used for the garments of 'men of religion', and is regarded as sacred. The olive trees yield oil which is stored in a cellar of the Sanctuary, and is used for religious purposes.

78 Cf. Ar. *hilāl*, which means "crescent moon", and is normally used for the symbols of that shape on top of minarets. Pîr Khidr Silêman, as a modern Yezidi, takes the phrase to refer to the sun, and explains the words *qublet il-bidor* (T. 7. 8; 8. 5) as **qiblat al-bi-dawr*, "the *qibla* which rotates". This runs counter to the rules of Arabic grammar, however, and the original meaning of the words may be "the *qibla* of the full moons" (Ar. *budūr*). The words thus stress the round shape—which the full moon has in common with another great object of worship, the sun—as a symbol of Yezidism in contradistinction to the crescent moon of Islam.

79 These vanes are normally renewed each year. Edmonds (1967: 18) describes the ceremony of putting the *hilêl* on the *qubbe* of Sheykh Shems. Pîr Khidr Silêman informs me that this is now only done once in several years.

80 So Guest 1987: 40, cf. Edmonds 1967: 11. The small spire does not seem to appeal greatly to the imagination of believers. It is often called simply "the small one". I was told on one occasion that it belonged to 'Ebd el-Qadir, and on another that it was dedicated to Sheykh Mûsa.

81 During the Festival of the Assembly in October 1992, a number of the lesser shrines, especially those dedicated to *khas* who were not the eponyms of known lineages, had no guardians to welcome pilgrims.

82 In October 1992, the guardian of the shrine of Sheykh Shems pronounced a fairly long standard benison, beginning, "Sheykh Shems is the refuge of this nation, sustenance, privileges and distinctions are in the hands of Sheykh Shems..." (*Şêşims meferrê wî milletî, maş û berat û xelat liba Şêşims)*, and containing a few verses from our Text 12 (e.g. T. 12. 18). On the custom of handing some earth to departing pilgrims see above.

83 For instance the Syrian *khas* mentioned in Lescot 1938: 79-80.

84 See T. 9. 41; 13. 16; 15, *passim*.

85 My investigations about this stone, prompted by al-Damlūjī's assertion (al-Damlūjī 1949: 192) that such a thing exists and that believers kiss it as part of the observances of the feast called *Jezhna 'Erefat* (see below, p. 157f), initially met with bewilderment and with the gentle but firm assertion that the Black Stone is in Mecca, not in Lalish. When shown a copy of the relevant passage of al-Damlūjī's book, however Chîcho made further enquiries; two Sheykhs we met asserted that the Black Stone did indeed exist, and was hidden under the *nîshan* in question, but Chîcho finally conducted me to a very similar *nîshan* nearby.

86 There is another place of pilgrimage of the same name in the Sheykhan, which is also known as "Little Lalish". See al-Damlūjī 1949: 186.

87 So Chîcho. According to al-Damlūjī (1949: 185), Sheykh Adi himself is thought to have established the Pillar.

88 See Edmonds 1967: 18 and, with a photograph, al-Damlūjī 1949: 185.

89 For a prayer that is sometimes pronounced here see above, p. 71. It is interesting to note that the nature and significance of the spring was probably kept hidden from Layard, who remarks: "The *slabs surrounding the basin* [my italics, PGK] are to some extent looked upon as holy... The water of the fountain is carefully preserved from impurities and is drunk by those who congregate

in the valley" (Layard 1849: I. 285). This suggests that, unless he was reluctant to reveal one of the secrets of the Yezidis, Layard was not aware that the Spring itself is the chief object of veneration.

90 Edmonds (1967: 19) mentions separate baptismal chambers for boys and girls.

91 I was not shown the latter sanctuary, which was said to be further up the hill.

92 So Furlani 1936. Edmonds (1967: 12) gives this figure's name as "Shaykh Ḥasan al-Musallakh"; this is almost certainly wrong, the Kurdish pronunciation being /mešèlle/.

93 Kurd. *ġefûrê rê*. The first word presumably derives from Ar. *ġaffara* "to guard, watch over", rather than *ġafara* "to forgive".

94 So Edmonds 1967: 11.

95 Notably in al-Damlūjī 1949: 183-6. Both this work and Furlani 1936, however, clearly rely heavily on a common source. This source was probably Isma'īl Beg's *al-Yazīdiya qadīman wa ḥadīthan*, (Beyrouth 1934), witness, e.g., the suspect "Isma'īl Antarali" (Furlani 1936: 75; al-Damlūjī 1949: 184), which probably represents a misreading of *Isma'îl 'Enzel(î)*, written in cursive Arabic script. al-Damlūjī, who does not acknowledge his sources, includes in his list of sanctuaries a number of names which the meticulous scholar Furlani found only in Isma'īl Beg's work, without any reference to a shrine. al-Damlūjī 's evidence can therefore hardly be regarded as reliable. On the *khas* in question see further below, Appendix.

96 Empson's plan (Empson 1928: 124) shows the market on the western side of the square only; at present the most conspicuous part of the *sûq* is on the northern side, opposite the *Kaniya Sipî*.

97 My informants called this structure "the *nîshan* of Pîr Mend", rather than "Sheykh Mend".

98 See also al-Damlūji 1949: 196. The words are generally understood to mean "the doorway of the Prince"; however, they could also mean "doorway of Mithra", which would correspond to the Zoroastrian term *Dar(b)-e Mehr*, i.e., a place where high rituals are performed. Edmonds (1967: 13) calls this doorway "the door of Āmadīn".

99 Cf. above, n. 68.

100 The following names were given by Chîcho, and confirmed by bystanders: 'Ezra'îl, Jibra'îl, Mikha'îl, Derda'îl, Mika'îl (sic!), Esrafîl and Melek Tawus.

101 See Guest 1987: plates 8, 9, 11.

102 There is another court to the south of the forecourt, which contains living quarters, a large guest-room, and a space where social gatherings are held.

103 al-Damlūjī 1949: 196. The word Mîr could refer either to the Prince himself, or to the "Emîr el-Ḥejj", see below, p. 126.

104 Edmonds 1967: 14. The area is called *Sejada Baba Sheykh*.

105 According to Edmonds (1967: 14), a doorway leading to the Prince's private quarters is located in this area.

106 Empson 1928: 122.

107 I.e., the west wall of the Sanctuary.

108 Compare the mace carried by a Zoroastrian priest about to undergo the initiation ceremony (*Nāvar*), see Modi 1922: 204.

109 A tile with a representation of a comb is now found on the outer wall. The Baba Chawûsh informed me that it represented a dragon (*ezhdeha*), but had been set in the wall upside-down.

110 Edmonds 1967: 14.

111 A tile with this symbol has now been set in the outer wall; I was told it represented a *gopal*, i.e., a club or walking stick.

112 They are set around an inscription containing the words, *Bismi'llāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm, xāliq al-arḍ wa 'l-samāwāt. Aḥfaẓ hādhā 'l-manzil, maḥall Šayx Hādī, mawqi' šayx wa 'ām*, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Creator of the earth and the heavens. Protect this house, the place of the Sheykh who guides (*Hādī*), the place of Sheykh and commoner."

113 In October 1992 I was told that the *senjaq* was behind the curtain, but a fellow visitor later told me that he had checked and that the niche was in fact empty. Empson (1928: 123) had a similar experience.

114 So Edmonds 1967: 15. I have no recollection of this hall.

115 Kurd. *kaf*, see T. 7. 5.

116 Empson (1928: 125) has an accurate description. Other authors, such as Layard and Edmonds, are aware of the existence of the Zemzem well, but make no mention of the cave or the steps leading down to it.

117 On the symbol of the cave in the ancient religion see above, Ch. 3, esp. p. 60.

118 Kurd. *meġare*, see Text 7. 5. For a description of the inside of the Cavern see Empson 1928: 126.

119 I am indebted for this information to Mr Robert Mitchell.

120 I was told, however, that the sacrificial bull is left there for a time during the Festival of the Assembly, before being taken to the shrine of Sheykh Shems to be sacrificed (see below, p. 153). Edmonds (1967: 15) mentions a place he calls "*gaykuj*", where animals were slaughtered. However, this clearly refers to a wider space behind the actual Sanctuary, though within its walls, which is still used for this purpose.

121 Edmonds 1967: 11.

122 On the pre-Islamic origins of elements of the Yezidi Cosmogony see above, Ch. 3. The links with the "Pen and the Tablet", which in the Judaeo-Christian and Islamic Traditions belong to Moses, are attributed in the modern Yezidism to figures connected with Sheykh Mûsa Sor, but not to that figure himself.

123 Cf. Layard 1849: I. 297: "The Yezidis recognise one Supreme Being but, as far as I could learn, they do not offer up any direct prayer or sacrifice to Him."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FOUR

A SURVEY OF PROMINENT YEZIDI HOLY BEINGS

The purpose of this survey is to discuss the main functions and characteristics attributed to those holy beings who figure prominently in the Yezidi tradition. These have been divided into eight groups: (1) Figures associated with the cosmogony; (2) Groups of holy beings and their members; (3) Eponyms of sheykhly lineages; (4) Other relatives of Sheykh Adi; (5) Eponyms of lineages of Pîrs; (6) Figures best known for their links with a particular function; (7) Figures of evident Muslim or Christian origin; (8) Others. These divisions are intended to make the world of Yezidi holy beings more accessible to Western readers by allowing them to compare figures who have important traits or functions in common. They do not, however, represent a principle of organisation that would seem familiar to Yezidis, nor has the alphabetical order been taken into account here. The data presented here deal only with figures of a certain prominence, and are in no way comprehensive. Only those descriptions have been taken into account which are either part of the Yezidi religious tradition or can be taken to be based on actual statements by believers.[1] Since it is impossible at the time of writing to verify most of the references found in the literature concerning shrines, mention has only been made of these when the available information seemed reliable. The absence of a reference to a shrine, therefore, cannot be taken to mean that none exists. Since most of the literature consulted was published several decades ago, moreover, some of the sanctuaries referred to may no longer exist, and the cults of some 'holy men' may likewise have disappeared.

1. FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COSMOGONY

TERMS FOR "GOD"[2]

Ellah

General: The word *Ellah* is generally used in utterances inspired by Arabic counterparts. ~ is the "best of Creators", T. 6. 1. There is one ~, T. 8. 1. Sheykh Hesen is the friend of ~, T. 8. 1.

Khudawend

Functions: *Creative*: He created the world and the six (!) angels (which presumably implies that he is one of the Seven), T. 2. 19, 20. He roamed in the world, and created the world and the four 'elements', T. 2. 21-4. He created Hell and Paradise for his creatures, T. 2. 26. Further acts of creation, T. 2. 26-9.

Other: He has established time and directions for men, T. 2. 37. He delivered them from the storm, T. 2. 38.

Identifications and associations: He steers the Ark, T. 2. 15, cf. Êzdan, T. 2. 16. He declares that Lalish is the "site of truth", T. 2. 15, cf. Pedsha, T. 1. 22.

Khudê

Characteristic imagery: He is described as an Ocean, and as "a light without beginning", T. 4. 2, 3, 4, 5; "His ocean is deep", T. 14. 23. Four 'streams' spring from the 'Ocean': T. 4. 2.

Functions: *Creative*: He fashioned the Throne, T. 4. 10.

Identifications and associations: He is Pedsha, T. 4. 4, 5; "perfect", T. 9. 46; 19. 70, cf. Sheykh Adi, T. 14. 26. The names of ~ and Melek Tawus are pronounced over the grave, T. 19. 52.

Other: Ibrahîm Khalîl recognised his ~ as Truth, T. 1. 42, 43. The pig bears witness to his name, T. 14. 14. He will be Judge at the End of Time, T. 17. 7.

Êzdan

General: The word probably derives from Persian *Yazdān*, another term for "God".

Functions: *Creative*: He threw men into the Mystery of Love, T. 2. 9. He threw rennet into the ocean; he brought out the Pearl and threw love into it, T. 2. 11 (cf. Pedsha, q.v.). He circled over the primeval waters, T. 2. 12. He made the ark, T.

2. 13. See also T. 2. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Identifications and associations: He built the fourteen layers of heaven and earth, T. 2. 10, cf. Sheykh Adi in T. 3. 3. He made and steered the Ark, T. 2. 14, 16, cf. Khudawend (q.v.).

TERMS LIKE "KING", "PRINCE", etc.[3]

Pedsha

General: The word means "King". It is used primarily for God, but can also denote Sheykh Adi and Êzîd, see below under "identifications and associations".

Characteristic imagery: He is omniscient, T. 1. 19. "The everlasting Lord", T. 1. 38.

Functions: *Creative*: Roamed over the primeval waters, T. 1. 21. Travelled with the Four (q.v.), T. 1. 22. By his order the Seven evolved from a single One, T. 5. 16-21. Further creative functions, T. 1. 23, 24, 25, 26.

Connection with the Pearl: He caused the Pearl to become visible, T. 1. 19. The mystery of his relationship with the Pearl is referred to, T. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The Pearl "comes from his word", T. 5. 6. He comes from the Pearl, T. 1. 6.

Establishes order and authorises the advent of Yezidism: He is the planner, T. 5. 12. He establishes measures and laws, T. 1. 12, 13 (= Emîr). He was the leader of an army ever since he was Prince (i.e., lord of this world), with the Seven (q.v.), T. 5. 11, 14. He separated the *Sharī'a* from Truth, and sent Truth into the world, T. 1. 13, 14. By order of his Angel the "Mystery of the Tradition" (i.e., the Yezidi faith) hung suspended in the air, T. 1. 15, 16. He authorised the Tradition, T. 1. 16. He established a succession of early leaders, T. 3. 15.

Other: He is in a state of Oneness (*Tewḥîd*), T. 5. 13. He is the Mystery in heaven, T. 5. 15. He is in the merciful heart, T. 9. 17. He is the Perfect One, T. 14. 1. His Throne will come down at the End of Time, T. 17. 3, 7. He is "nicely spoken", T. 1. 12.

Identifications and associations: He declares that Lalish is "the site of Truth", T. 1. 22, cf. Khudawend (q.v.). God is ~ : "God, the Lord of both worlds, is our Pedsha" (*Ellah rebbu 'l-'alemeyn pasha-ê mê*) E. 40; T. 4. 4, 5. He removed his *khirqe* at the *Kaniya Sipî* and administered baptism, T. 3. 15, a function probably belonging originally to Sheykh Adi. Both Sheykh Adi and Êzîd are called "Sultan and ~ ", T. 8. 3.

Sultan, Siltan

General: A general term, meaning approximately "sovereign, leader", and used mainly for Sheykh Adi and Êzîd. The latter is often called "Sultan Êzîd".

Characteristic imagery: People of the *Sharī'a* are the enemies of ~ (i.e., of Sheykh Adi as a symbol of Yezidism), T. 14. 12.

Identifications and associations: He is identical with Sheykh Adi, T. 3. 3; 16. 22, 29, 34, 46. Sheykh Adi is called ~ Sheykh Adi, T. 1. 45. Both Sheykh Adi and Êzîd are called " ~ and Pedsha", T. 8. 3.

Emîr, Mîr

General: A general term meaning "Prince".

Functions: *Creative*: He established the cornerstones and foundations of the earth, T. 1. 8, 9. He is mentioned with the Throne in pre-eternity, all-knowing, all-seeing, T. 1. 5.

After creation: Pedsha became ~ when he became lord of the world, T. 5. 11, 14.

Identifications and associations: He is God, PX. He shares his creative functions with God and Pedsha (q.v.).

Other: Something mysterious is said to be in the presence of ~ , T. 14. 9. Lovers come to know him, T. 1. 8. References to his "sign", T. 19. 17, 18, 66.

Rebb

General: The word means "Lord". The *Qewl* published here as T. 10 is said to be dedicated to Melek Tawus, but the text refers only to ~. Since the meaning of the word is a general one, no conclusions can be drawn from this regarding other passages where the word is used, such as the first seven verses of T. 2.

Functions: *Creative:* T. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Other: The work of the 'commoner' is done in his service, T. 9. 10. The soul recognises its ~ after death, T. 19. 38.

OTHERS

Melek Tawus

General: The leader of the Heptad of Archangels. Widely identified by non-Yezidis with the devil of other religions. Yezidis often state that he is responsible for the affairs of this world, good or bad. Since believers are discouraged from discussing him by name (*Jilwe*, see G. 202), the relatively small number of

references to him in the Tradition is not commensurate with his importance. T. 10 is said to be devoted to him (see above, under "Rebb"). Since this claim is probably representative of informed Yezidi opinion, it is here accepted as true.

Characteristic imagery: Visually, the Peacock, perhaps because of the conspicuous 'eyes' on its tail;[4] on the peacock images see above. In the *Qewls* he is called "the ancient one", T. 10. 2; "the eternal one"., T. 10. 5. He does not give birth and has never been born, T. 10. 8.

Functions: *Lord of this world*: He is king of the world, T. 10. 2. The lord of men and jinns, T. 10. 4. He made Adam eat forbidden food, thus helping him to live in the world, MR.

Special concern with the Yezidi community: He is said to have come to earth in order to help the Yezidis, MR. The Yezidis are called "people of ~ ", MR.

Other: "Angel of the Throne", T. 10. 2. "Master of firmament, moon and sun", T. 10. 6. "Judge", T. 10. 14, 15. He is called "remedy, healer", T. 10. 17. On his link with oaths see E. 56, and below, Ch. 6.

Curative powers: He guards against the Evil Eye, Emp. 53.

Shrines: A shrine at Lalish is dedicated to him, C. Also a rock-cleft in Sinjar, Emp. 52f.

Identifications and associations: "You are forever God", T. 10. 1, 3. He is Êzîd, C. He shares the connection with oaths with Sheykh Shems (q.v.).

Other: The names of God and ~ are pronounced over the grave, T. 19. 52.

The Greatest, or Glorious, Angel

General: This being is mentioned in T. 7. 13 and T. 9. 15. He is said to be on high and in the presence of the Seven. T. 10, which is probably devoted to Melek Tawus, calls him "the living one, the glorious one", T. 10. 5. There is also a reference to "the Angel above", T. 9. 18. The words could refer to God, Melek Tawus, or both.

Êzîd, Sultan Êzî

General: His name derives from that of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, see above, pp. 28, 37. He seems in a sense to represent the Yezidi faith as such.

Functions: *Lord of this world*: The King is the planner, ~ knows who is in front and who is behind, T. 5. 12. Pedsha is the Mystery in heaven; this moment, this hour is in the hand of ~ , T. 5. 15. He has power over many, T. 14. 25. He holds

the Pen of Power in his hand, T. 1. 7.

Symbol of Yezidism: The Yezidis are followers of the name of ~, T. 8. 10. The community performs his *dhikr*, T. 3. 8; 4. 12, 16. At circumcision, when a boy becomes a member of the Yezidi community, he says: "I am the lamb of the Red ~", A. 311. "The descendants of the Red ~ " (i.e., presumably, the Yezidis) are referred to, T. 3. 15. "The symbols of ~ are the *khirqes*", T. 3. 22, 23. He will fulfill the wishes of followers of the house of Adi, T. 3. 10. On sitting down, some Yezidis say: "Ya Êzîd", PGK.

Shrines: Melek Tawus's shrine at Lalish is said to belong also to ~, since the two are identical, C and others.

Identifications and associations: He is sometimes said to be identical with Melek Tawus, C. He is identified with Behlûlê Dîn (q.v.), E. 49. He guides the Ark, T. 2. 16, cf. Khudawend, T. 2. 14. As with Melek Tawus, the members of the Heptad are represented as being under his command, T. 5. 11, 14. In T. 8. 3 we find both " ~ is my Pedsha" and "Sultan Sheykh Adi is my Pedsha." The colour red, and perhaps the connection with the Pen, link him with Mûsa Sor (q.v). Sheykh Hesen (q.v.) is likewise said to be Lord of the Tablet and the Pen.

Other: His Mystery is referred to, T. 7. 5; 9. 35; 13. 12. He is saluted, T. 14. 1.

Jibra'îl

See below, under "Groups of Holy Beings".

Sheykh Adi

General: On the historical figure see above, Ch. 2.

Functions and characteristics: *Creative*: He created the world, T. 3. 3. He brought forth the fourteen layers of the earth and sky, T. 3. 3.

He is (semi-)divine: Worship and prostrations for him, T. 9. 46. He is perfect, T. 14. 26. His name is "the pre-eternal word", T. 3. 2, 18. He is the *quṭb* of the time, T. 16. 11.

His links with other holy beings: Sheykh Shems was his *wezîr*, E. 32. He assembled holy men in the Cavern, T. 15. 24. He gave a gift to Meḥmed Reshan and made him leader of the Forty, T. 16. 5. He is implicitly mentioned as a member of the Heptad, T. 6. 1.

His dîwan ("assembly"):[5] T. 7. 7; 9. 13, 18. On the Day of Judgement believers will assemble at the *dîwan* of ~ and Sheykh Hesen, T. 17. 9.

Leader of the community: The pristine leaders were invested with his *khirqe*, T. 3. 16. The prayers of his Qewwals are still prayed, T. 6. 12. He is called "crown from the first until the last", T. 1. 45; 6. 1.

Protector: He promises protection to Dawûd, T. 15. 15. Believers ask him for a livelihood, T. 9. 16. He is a "place of refuge, a source of help", with Sheykh Mend and Sheykh Shems, T. 14. 20. "Lord of Mercy", T. 16. 1.

As a figure in history: He is in Hakkari, T. 9. 17. He was born at Beyt el-Far, and came to Hakkari; people gathered around him, T. 16. 2, 3, 4. He is in the Cavern, T. 16. 3, 23, 24. In the cave, T. 16. 25.

Miracles and exploits: He performs miracles, T. 15. 8, 16, 17. He made Dawûd's tongue grow again, T. 15. 14. It is implied that he caused his servant to eat insatiably by creating an ocean inside him, thus putting his opponents out of countenance, F. 83; T. 15. 18f. He made Meḥmed Reshan ride a rock, T. 16. 12, 13. Challenged by other Sheykhs, T. 16. 9, 10. The miracle of widening the Cavern is implicitly associated with him, T. 16. 27. Likewise the miracle of cows eating his opponents' lions, T. 16. 38-41. He beat his stick upon the rock and brought forth water (from Zemzem in Mecca), T. 16. 31, 32. He spoke to the water and brought it forth, T. 16. 36. He brought Seyyid Eḥmed (el-Rifa'î)'s rosary and stick directly from Mecca, T. 16. 33. He miraculously released Zeyn el-Dîn (q.v.) from prison, D. 183.

Shrines: The main Sanctuary at Sheykh Adi is dedicated to him.

Identifications and associations: He is perfect, T. 14. 26, cf. Khudê, T. 19. 70. He is called Sultan, T. 1. 45; 3. 3; 8. 3 (Êzîd is called Sultan in the same verse); 16. 22, 29, 34, 45. He brought forth the layers of the earth and sky, T. 3. 3, cf. Êzdan, T. 2. 10. He is sometimes identified with Yezîd and Khidr-Ilyas, E. 49. For the legend of the Ocean inside his servant see also under Dawûd and Mar Yuḥenna.

Other: His Mystery, T. 9. 34; 13. 10. He has a Covenant with Dawûd, T. 15. 17.

Sheykh Shems

General: On the link between the mythical and the historical figure see above, Ch. 2. He is a member of the Heptad. Also one of the Four (q.v.). He is generally identified or closely associated with the sun. He is the eponym of the Shemsani Sheykhs, E. 31. The *Meshef Resh* is attributed to him, F. 81.

Characteristic imagery: That of a *wezîr*, or "second-in-command". He is the

wezîr of Sheykh Adi, E. 32; the *wezîr* of Sheykh Hesen, PX. ~ had a factor or lieutenant (*wezîr*) of the same name, F. 81.

Functions: *Creative*: He brought the "cornerstones", T. 12. 2.

Links with God or Creator: He is really God, PX. He is the Creator, T. 12. 3, 4, 5. He is the friend of God, T. 8. 1.

Goes to see God daily: He goes to see God three times a day; prayers are addressed to him, L. 66. He goes to see God three times a day, PX.

Links with the Sun: He is the "Divinity of the Sun and *qibla* of the believers", J. 11-12. "Lord of the Dawn", T. 6. 5; 12. 9.

Links with Fire: Fire is his terrestrial counterpart, J. 11-12.

Object of devout feelings: To kiss his hands and robe is the object of pilgrimage, T. 6. 5; 12. 9. He is called "my religion", T. 8. 6. "We give praise to him", T. 12. 1. He is called "Lord of grace" and "Lord of mystical knowledge", T. 6. 4, 6; 12. 8, 10. "Place of refuge, source of help", with Sheykh Mend and Sheykh Adi, T. 14. 20, 21. He is the object of believers' hopes, T. 6. 8, 10, 11; 9. 15; 12. 12, 14, 15. He is entreated to investigate the state of "his house" (i.e., the world), T. 7, *passim*. He is called "remedy for all ills", T. 12. 4.

His role in the affairs of the world: He has designed men and set them on their way, T. 6. 8; 12. 12. He gives sustenance and takes it away, T. 12. 5. All creatures have "a part in" him, T. 12. 6. Birds share the Mystery with him, T. 12. 16. Jews and Christians have gone in search of him, T. 12. 17, 18.

Link with oaths: Oaths are sworn "by the Doorway of (the shrine of) Sheykh Shems", PX.

Shrines: He has a major shrine, with *qubbe,* at Lalish, where the bull-sacrifice takes place. He has a tomb or shrine near Beḥzanê, F. 81. Also shrines in Sheykhan and Sinjar, F. 81.

Identifications and associations: With God, see under "functions". For his creative functions, cf. God, Sheykh Adi. The connection with oaths he shares with Melek Tawus (q.v.). His name is mentioned twice in a list of members of the Heptad, T. 6. 1. He is identified with Shams-e Tabrīzī, the friend of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī, T. 12; and is called "the Tartar", T. 3. 14; 12, *passim*. He is sometimes identified with Jesus, E. 49. He is "Lord of the Moon", T. 14. 21, an epithet usually belonging to Fekhr el-Dîn, J. 10. He is mentioned together with Fekhr, T. 9. 32, 38. He is said to have nine sons: Amadîn, Babik, Khidr, 'Elî ,

Evdal, Babadîn, Hewind, Ḥesen, Toqil, E. 32. The Lord of Jinns (q.v.) is among his followers, J. 12.

Other: His Mystery, T. 13. 14. His *mor* ("baptism"), T. 6. 7; 12. 11.

2. Groups of Holy Beings and their members

The "Seven Mysteries", or "Seven Great Angels"

General: The names of the Seven who make up the Heptad are variously given. A set of names of Judaeo-Christian or Islamic origin is generally identified with another group of names, some of which belong to relatives of Sheykh Adi. Anastase/Bittner's version of the *Meshef Resh* gives the following pairs: 'Ezra'îl = Melek Tawus; Derda'îl = Sheykh Hesen; Israfîl = Sheykh Shems; Mîka'îl = Sheykh Obekr; Jibra'îl = Sejjad el-Dîn (Sejadîn); Shemna'îl = Naṣir el-Dîn; Ṭûra'îl = Fekhr el-Dîn. Browne/Guest's version differs slightly: 'Ezazîl = Melek Tawus; Jibra'îl = Sheykh Obekr; 'Ezra'îl = Secad el-Dîn, and Nûra'îl = unknown. In the morning prayer the following names are found: Shems el-Dîn, Fekhr el-Dîn, Sejadîn, Naṣir el-Dîn, Babadîn, Sheykh Shems, and Sheykh Adi (note the double mention of Shems and absence of Sheykh Hesen), T. 6.1. T. 7.13 has: 'Ezra'îl, Jibra'îl, Mîka'îl, Shifqa'îl, Dirda'îl, Israfîl, 'Ezazîl. Chîcho named: 'Ezra'îl, Jibra'îl, Mîkha'îl, Derda'îl, Mîka'îl [sic], Israfîl, Melek Tawus. Other variants are attested (for Sheykh Shems see F. 81). They were created by God, in the Pearl, MR, cf. T. 1. 31. Elsewhere it is implied that Khudawend is one of the Seven, T. 2. 19.

Characteristic imagery: The number seven. Seven lights are lit for them near the doorway of the Sanctuary, see above, p. 81.

Functions: *They play a role in this world:* They approached Adam and made him come alive, T. 1. 32; 2. 25. They came to "the Pearl and the Cup" seven hundred years after the completion of Creation, T. 2. 29. When Pedsha became Mîr (i.e., when the world was created), he was together with the Seven, T. 5. 11, 14. *They are as one*: From One they became Seven by order of Pedsha, T. 5. 16-21.They are Seven doorways for the one Word, T. 4. 14. They are exactly alike, T. 5. 22.

'Ezra'îl, 'Izra'îl

General: The angel of death, T. 19. 33, 35, 36; J. 10. "I fear the qualities and

majesty of ~ ", T. 19. 32.

Identifications and associations: Sejadîn is likewise said to fetch the soul, J. 10. The MR, in Browne/Guest's version, identifies 'Ezra'îl with Sejadîn. Anastase/Bittner's version identifies him with Melek Tawus, presumably because the latter ordains bad things as well as good.

Jibra'îl

General: Plays a prominent role, under God, at Creation, MR.

Curative powers: Diseases of the soul, O. 12.

'Ezra'îl and Jibra'îl

General: They are apparently thought of as a pair, possibly representing good and bad aspects of divine power.

Shrine: At Lalish.

The "Four Angels" (*Char Melek*), "Four Mysteries"

General: The individual members of this group are not often mentioned; they are probably the four sons of Êzdîna Mîr (i.e., Sheykh Shems, Fekhr el-Dîn, Sejadîn and Naṣir el-Dîn, E. 4), see T. 7. 9. There is a strong link between the Four Angels and the four 'elements', T. 5. 25, 26, 27.

Characteristic imagery: The number four: "Four streams from the Ocean of God", T. 4. 2. "Four lamps with one wick", T. 4. 14. "Four humans from one foundation", T. 4. 15, 16.

Functions: *The play a role at Creation*: They travel with Pedsha (q.v.), T. 1. 22. God's foundation consists of four cornerstones, T. 4. 3.

"The Eleven"

General: Very little is known about this group. "The eleven pairs who are ready for battle", T. 4. 9. "Eleven are a deep ditch; seven are dark and four are luminous", T. 4. 14. Êzdîna Mîr had seven daughters and four sons, PX.

The "Forty Holy Beings" (*Chil Mêr, Chil Mêran*)

General: The concept of "forty saints" is well-known in popular Islam. However, the Yezidi *Chil Mêran* is sometimes conceived of as one person, and identified by some with Sheref el-Dîn, who lifted a large stone which forty men could not lift, E. 11.

Shrines: At Lalish. The highest peak of a mountain in Sinjar has this name, G. 33.

Identifications and associations: Ḥesen Meman is said to be their leader, T. 9. 41.The same is said about Dawûdê Derman (F.41-2), and about Meḥmed Reshan (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 263). Sheykh Adi made Meḥmed Reshan leader of the Forty, T. 16. 5.

3. Eponyms of Sheykhly lineages

Qatani Sheykhs

Sheykh Adi

See above.

Sheykh Obekr

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Qatanî Sheykhs, E. 31. The name presumably derives from Abū Bakr (cf. below under "Ebû Bekr"), via a stage */Awû Bakr/. Many modern Yezidis, however, deny any connection between the two. T. 5 is dedicated to him but is uninformative as to his character or functions.

Functions: The *khirqe* is said to have come to him, which implies that he played an important role in the history of the faith, T. 3. 12.

Curative powers: His shrine near Ba'shîqe cures fever, E. 74.

Shrines: His tomb is situated in the main Sanctuary at Lalish; a small *qubbe* is erected over it. A shrine at Ba'shîqe and one in the western part of Beḥzanê are also dedicated to him, F. 68.

Identifications and associations: The MR (Browne/Guest) identifies him with Jibra'îl; MR (Anastase/Bittner) with Mîka'îl. Sheykh Obekr, 'Ebd el-Qadir el-Reḥmanî, and Isma'îl 'Enzel are the eponyms of branches of the Qatani family of Sheykhs, E. 31. They are said to be Sheykh Adi's brothers (together with 'Ebd el-'Ezîz), see above Ch. 2. He is sometimes identified with Ebû Bekr, E. 49.

Other: His "mystery" is referred to T. 9. 37; 13. 13. He is called "my lord", T. 8. 3.

'Ebd el-Qadir el-Reḥmanî

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Qatanî Sheykhs, E. 31. He probably owes his origin to the historical 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

Characteristic imagery: Traces of a Sufi background are unmistakable. His mother is said to have been the daughter of Sheykh Juneyd; she drank from a stream into which the blood of el-Ḥellâj, a pupil of her father's, had trickled, and conceived ~ , E. 72.

Shrines: PGK was told that the small *qubbe* over the grave of Sheykh Obekr was dedicated to him. A sanctuary close to the Qîran village of Mejnûniyye is devoted to Sheykh 'Ebd el-Qadir el-Jîlanî (E. 72), and thus probably also to "el-Reḥmanî".

Identifications and associations: See under "Sheykh Obekr". "Qadirê Reḥman" and Obekr are mentioned together in a Yezidi prayer, Dirr 1917-18: 559.

Sheykh Isma'îl 'Enzel

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Qatanî Sheykhs, E. 31.

Shrines: Has a shrine at Lalish.

Identifications and associations: See under "Sheykh Obekr".

Other: A "Prophet Isma'îl" is invoked in T. 19. 31, 32. Furlani's entry "Šeyḫ Ismā'il 'Antarali" (F. 75) is probably based on a misreading of this name.

SHEMSANI SHEYKHS

Êzdîna Mîr, Yezdîn Amîr

General: He is not himself an eponym, but is held to be the ancestor of the branches of Shemsani Sheykhs, the mythical father of Shems al-Dîn, Fekhr al-Dîn, Sejadîn and Naṣir el-Dîn, E. 4. " ~ and all four mysteries", T. 7. 9.

Sheykh Shems

See above.

Amadîn, 'Emad el-Dîn

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Shemsani Sheykhs, via Sheykh Shems (the other being Babik), E. 31. One of the sons of Sheykh Shems, E. 32.

Curative powers: Stomach ache, F. 69; stomach pains, together with Babadîn, J. 10.

Shrines: At Lalish.

Identifications and associations: His mother was Khatûna Fekhre, his brother Fekhr el-Dîn, F. 72. He is sometimes identified with Mîka'îl, F. 69. For his association with Sheykh Shems and Sheykh Babik see under "General". For his links with Babadîn see under "curative powers".

Sheykh Babik

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Shemsani Sheykhs, via Sheykh Shems (the other being Amadîn), E. 31. One of the nine sons of Sheykh Shems, E. 32. "A derwish from the time of Sheykh Adi", C.

Shrines: At Lalish.

Identifications and associations: On his possible identity with the heresiarch Babak see above, p. 61. On his links with Sheykh Shems and Sheykh Amadîn see under "General".

Melek Sheykh Fekhr el-Dîn

General: A member of the Heptad. One of the Four (q.v.), the sons of Êzdîna Mîr. The brother of Sheykh Shems, with whom he is often mentioned, T. 9. 32, 38. The eponym of the main branch of the Shemsanî Sheykhs, whose subdivisions are Mend and Fekhre.

Characteristic imagery: His connection with the Moon. The association with Sheykh Shems, the lord of the Sun, is clearly an important aspect of his persona.

Functions: *Links with the Moon*: F. 71; J. 10.

Curative powers: Illnesses afflicting children during the first and last phases of the Moon (*kêma heyvî*), J. 10; PX.

Shrines: In the village of Memê Shivan, D. 179.

Identifications and associations: He is identified with Nûra'îl, and also with Kamûsh, MR. His brother, Sheykh Shems, is called "Lord of the Moon" in T. 14. 21, presumably because of ~'s imagery. ~ is also identified with Moses (q.v.), E. 49. According to one tradition, his mother was Khatûna Fekhre, and his brother, Amadîn, F. 72. For his links with Sheykh Shems, Sheykh Mend and Khatûna Fekhre see under "General", above.

Other: His Mystery, T. 13. 15. The prayers of his followers are still prayed, T. 6. 12. His permission is sought for the recitation of *Qewls*, T. 1. 1, 2.

Sheykh Mend b. Fekhr, Sheykh Mend Pasha

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Shemsani Sheykhs, via Fekhr el-Dîn, (the other being Fekhre), E. 31. He is said to be a son of Fekhr el-Dîn.

Characteristic imagery: Derives from his connection with snakes.

Functions: He is said to "rule over serpents", F. 76.

Miracles or exploits: Sheykhs of his lineage can handle snakes without suffering ill-effects, PX.

Curative powers: Snake bite, J. 10.

Shrines: At Lalish, where his shrine is said to contain a cave full of snakes. Another shrine at Beḥzanê, F. 76; Dr. 28.

Identifications and associations: He is called "Place of refuge, source of help", together with Sheykh Adi and Sheykh Shems, T. 14. 20. For his links with Fekhr el-Dîn and Khatûna Fekhre see under "General".

Other: He is called "Lord of the Assembly" (F. 76), a relatively general honorific epithet.

Khatûna Fekhre

General: A female figure, the eponym of a subdivision of the Fekhr el-Dîn branch of the Shemsani Sheykhs, via Sheykh Fekhr el-Dîn (the other is Mend), E. 31.

Curative powers: She is approached by women for problems connected with childbirth, J. 10.

Shrines: At Lalish.

Identifications and associations: Daughter of Sheykh Fekhr, sister of Sheykh Mend, wife of Ḥesen Jellê, PX. Mother of Amadîn and Fekhr el-Dîn, F. 72. For her links with Fekhr el-Dîn and Sheykh Mend see under "General".

Other: She is especially popular with Sinjari Yezidis, C.

(Melek) Sheykh Sejadîn, (Sejad el-Dîn)

General: A member of the Heptad, mentioned in T. 9. 41; 13. 16. One of the Four (q.v.), the sons of Êzdîna Mîr. The eponym of a main branch of Shemsanî Sheykhs, E. 31.

Functions: That of a psychopomp, J. 10.

Shrines: His tomb may be in the vicinity of Ba'shîqe, F. 80-1.

Identifications and associations: He is variously identified with Jibra'îl and 'Ezra'îl, MR (see above under "Seven Mysteries"), and sometimes with 'Elî (q.v.). The function of a psychopomp is also attributed to 'Ezra'îl (q.v.), and to the Ahl-e Haqq Archangel Muṣṭafâ, K. 70. Naṣir el-Dîn has a similar function.

(Mîr) Sheykh Naṣir el-Dîn

General: A member of the Heptad. One of the Four (q.v.), the sons of Êzdîna Mîr. The eponym of a main branch of the Shemsani Sheykhs, E. 31. His name is

sometimes given as Naṣir el-Dîn of Baban, T. 9 .41; 13. 16.

Characteristic imagery: Angel of death, with a knife.

Functions: He is the angel of death, PX. "The divinity who cuts off heads", J. 10. "He was the executioner of Sheykh Adi; if the Sheykh was displeased with anyone, Naṣir killed him", F. 79-80.

Shrines: A water tank inside Sheykh Adi's shrine at Lalish is named after him; it is said that he cleans his knife there when anyone has died in the world, PX.

Identifications and associations: He is identified with Shemna'îl, and with Nasrûkh, MR. Also with 'Umer b. el-Kheṭṭab (q.v.), E. 49.

ADANI SHEYKHS

(Melek) Sheykh Hesen

General: A prominent member of the Heptad. "The ancestor of the Adanî Sheykhs", F. 73. On the historical figure see above, Ch. 2. T. 11 is devoted to him.

Characteristic imagery: That of a preacher. He has taken his place on the *minbar*, and intones hymns, T. 4. 18. His speech is free of idle words, T. 11. 4. "Of sweet words", T. 11. 1.

Functions: *Is dear to believers:* He is the Guide, and gives believers hope, T. 11. 3. "The lands from east to west weep because he weeps", T. 11. 5. He is called "my ancestor", T. 8. 6.

Lord of the Tablet and the Pen: J. 10.

Lord of the White Wind: J. 10.

Curative powers: Diseases of the lungs and rheumatic complaints, O. 12. Rheumatism, J. 10 (rheumatism is associated with wind, E. 74).

Shrines: A major *qubbe* on the shrine of Sheykh Adi is dedicated to him, being located over his tomb. A separate shrine at Lalish belongs jointly to him and to "his brother Melek Sheykh Hesen", C.

Identifications and associations: He is identified with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who was his incarnation in the period of Behlûl (q.v.), E. 33. Also with the Prophet Muḥammad, E. 49. He is said to be the ancestor of Sheykh Fekhr and the House of Adi, T. 11. 5. He is mentioned together with Sheykh Adi and Sheykh Shems, T. 6. 2. The Assembly of Sheykh Adi and ~ will be a centre for the faithful on the Day of Judgement, T. 17. 9. "The Tradition stood still at the names of Sheykh Adi and ~ ",

T. 11. 27. The connection with Wind and rheumatism links him with Sheykh Mûsa Sor (q.v.). He shares his connection with the Pen with Êzîd and with the Ahl-e Haqq Archangel Pîr Mûsî, K. 70; this trait may originally have belonged to Sheykh Mûsa Sor (q.v.).

Other: His Mystery is referred to, T. 9. 36; 13. 12.

Sheykh Mûsa Sor ("Red Moses"), Sheykh Mûs

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Adanî Sheykhs (the others being Sheref el-Dîn and Ibrahîm Khetnî), E. 31.

Functions: *Lord of Air and Wind:* F. 79; J. 10. At harvesting and winnowing time the Yezidis say, "O Red Sheykh Mûs, give a great deal of wind, then we shall prepare for you baked [= red] loaves" (*Ya Şêx Mûsê Şor, bidey bayekî zor, dê bo te pêjîn şewkêt şor*), J. 10.

Curative powers: Illnesses connected with air, F. 68. Diseases of the lungs and rheumatic complaints (he shares this concern with Sheykh Hesen, q.v.), O. 12. Rheumatic complaints, J. 10.

Shrines: At Lalish, D. 182.

Identifications and associations: The connection with the wind and with rheumatism links him with Sheykh Hesen (q.v.). The latter shares his connection with the Pen with the Ahl-e Haqq Archangel Pîr Mûsî (K. 70); since that trait probably derives from the story about Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law on Mount Sinai, it may originally have belonged to ~. It is also attributed to Êzîd (q.v.), with whom ~ shares the epithet "the Red". He is said to be a companion of 'Ebd Resh (q.v.), F. 79. He is believed to be the brother of Ibrahîm Khetnî (q.v.), D. 183. On his links with Sheref el-Dîn and Ibrahîm Khetnî see also under "General", above.

Sheref el-Dîn

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Adanî Sheykhs, via Sheykh Hesen (the others being Ibrahîm Khetnî and Sheykh Mûs), E. 31. He is said to have introduced the Jiwane tribe of Sinjar to the Yezidi faith. His status in Sinjar is comparable to that of Sheykh Adi, E. 5-6; G. 33.

Characteristic imagery: That of a defender of the faith, see under "Miracles or exploits". A ballad about this is one of the best-known Yezidi songs.

Functions: He helps the weather (?), F. 81.[6]

Miracles or exploits: According to legend, when Sheykh Hesen was killed by Badr al-Dîn Lu'lu', Sheykh Shems was in Tabriz; Sheref el-Dîn was also away from Lalish, but he sent messages and organised the defense of the community, PX.

Curative powers: Smallpox, German measles, F. 81. Smallpox and jaundice, J. 11. Skin diseases, O. 12.

Shrines: At Lalish. In the village of Beyt Nar, D. 180. In the village of Reshîd in Sinjar, E. 6. He has a small shrine on the summit of Mt Chilmêran, G. 33.

Identifications and associations: According to legend Sheykh Hesen was unmarried but created a son, ~. The latter in turn refused to marry, and Sheykh Hesen created another son, Ibrahîm Khetnî, Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 247. On his links with Sheykh Mûs and Ibrahîm Khetnî see also above under "General". He is sometimes identified with the "Forty Holy Beings" (q.v.), E. 11.

Ibrahîm Khetni[7]

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Adanî Sheykhs, via Sheykh Hesen (the others being Sheref el-Dîn and Sheykh Mûsa Sor), E. 31. He was created by Sheykh Hesen because Sheref el-Dîn (q.v.) refused to marry.

Shrines: At Lalish, D. 183

Identifications and associations: See under "General". He is said to be a brother of Sheykh Mûsa Sor, D. 183.

4. Other relatives of Sheykh Adi

Sons of Sheykh Shems[8]

Babadîn

General: His name occurs in an enumeration of members of the Heptad in T. 6.1, but not in the MR. He is said to have been a disciple of Sheykh Adi, F. 70.

Curative powers: Stomach pains (with Amadîn), J. 10; O. 12.

Shrines: At Lalish, near that of Amadîn.

'Elî

General: See below under "Figures of evident Muslim or Christian origin".

Sheykh Toqil, Tokel

General: He is said to have been a disciple of Sheykh Adi, F. 82. "A derwish of the time of Sheykh Adi", C.

Khidr

General: He is probably identical with Khidr Ilyas, on whom see under "Figures of evident Muslim or Christian origin".

Ḥesen, Ebdal, and Hewind

General: Nothing is known about these figures except that they are said to be sons of Sheykh Shems. E. 32.

OTHERS

Sheykhalê Shems, Sheykh Khal Shemsan

General: He is said to be "the son Sheykh Shems's sister", PX; "a disciple of Sheykh Adi", F. 74.

Miracles or exploits: In the days of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' he was released from prison and came to Sheykh Adi two days before the end of Ramadan. Sheykh Adi ordered the festival to begin on that day, see Ch. 6.

Shrines: At Lalish.

Zeyn el-Dîn, Zîndîn, Zendîn

General: On the historical figure see above, Ch. 2.

Miracles or exploits: One day, when riding Sheykh Adi's horse, he saw the Seat and the Throne above, and the Bull and the Fish below. He was then miraculously transported to Cairo, where he performed miracles. The Governor of Egypt then had him imprisoned. Sheykh Adi miraculously extended his stick from Lalish to Cairo and brought him back, D. 183.

Shrines: Two shrines near Beḥzanê, one a sacred stone, the other a tomb-shrine, Dr. 28. He is thought to be buried at Beḥzanê, D. 182-3.

5. EPONYMS OF LINEAGES OF PIRS

Pîr Ḥesen Meman

General: The eponym of a family of Pîrs, whose subdivisions are Ḥesen Elka and

Khetîbesî, E. 6, 34; F. 41-2.

Functions: He is said to be head of the Forty (q.v.), T. 9. 41; 13. 16.

Shrines: At Sheykh Adi, D. 184.

Identifications and associations: The leadership of the Forty is also attributed to Dawûdê Derman (F. 41-2), and to Meḥmed Reshan, Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 263.

Ḥesen Elka

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Ḥesen Meman, E. 34. Nothing further is known about him.

Khetîbesî

General: She is the female eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Ḥesen Meman, E. 34. Nothing further is known.

Pîr Afat

General: The eponym of a family of Pîrs, whose subdivisions are Meḥmed Reshan, Buwal, and Pîr Derbês, E. 34.

Functions: Associated with hail and damage to crops, F. 68; with inundations and storms, J. 9.

Shrines: A shrine near the village of Berestaq, F. 68.

Mem Reshan, Meḥmed Reshan

General: Eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Pîr Afat, with Buwal and Pîr Derbês, E. 34.

Characteristic imagery: His usual epithet is "the lion", T. 9. 41; 13. 16.

Functions: *Lord of the rains*: F. 68; J. 10-11. There is an invocation, "Oh Meḥmed Reshan sprinkle (moisture), make rain fall copiously" (*Mehmed Reşano bi-reşîne, baranê bi-cerka barîne*), J. 10-11. He is the protector of harvest and bringer of rain; his feast is celebrated in spring, O. 3.

Other: He is said to be the head of the Forty, F. 78; T. 16. 5; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 263. The most powerful oaths are sworn by him, F. 78.

Miracles or exploits: Sheykh Adi made him ride a rock, T. 16. 12, 13, 18, 20. He told the hostile Sheykhs to rub their backs against the wall of the Cavern to widen it, T. 16. 27.

Shrines: A shrine at Lalish. His tomb is said to be located behind Mt Meqlûb, F.

78.

Identifications and associations: He shares his connection with oaths with Melek Tawus and Sheykh Shems. The leadership of the Forty is also attributed to Ḥesen Meman and to Dawûdê Derman.

Buwal

General: Eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Pîr Afat, the others being Memê Reshan and Pîr Derbês, E. 34.

Pîr Derbês

General: Eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Pîr Afat, the others being Memê Reshan and Buwal, E. 34.

Pîr Jerwan

General: Eponym of a family of Pîrs, whose subgroups are Êsîbiya, Ḥajjî Muḥemmed, 'Omer Khale, and Qedîb el-Ban, E. 34.

Characteristic imagery: Connected with scorpions.

Functions: He is the Pîr of scorpions. Pîrs of his lineage can handle scorpions with impunity, F. 72; J. 11; PX.

Curative powers: He is a protector against scorpions, O. 5.

Shrines: At Lalish.

Pîr Êsîbiya

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Jerwan, the others being Ḥajjî Muḥemmed, 'Omer Khale, and Qedîb el-Ban, E. 34.

Functions: He is said to have been Sheykh Adi's treasurer, F. 75.

Shrines: At Lalish, F. 75.

Identifications and associations: See above under "General".

Other: His name derives from Greek Eusebius, which suggests that he was of Christian origin, F. 75.

Sheykh Qeḍîb el-Ban

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Jerwan, the others being Ḥajjî Muḥemmed, 'Omer Khale, and Êsîbiya, E. 34. He was a companion of Sheykh Adi, who travelled back and forth between the latter and Sheykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī with letters, D. 44-5.

Curative powers: Internal diseases, F. 80.
Shrines: He has a *qubbe* near Sheykh Adi, F. 80.
Identifications and associations: See above under "General".

Ḥajjî Muḥemmed

General: The eponym of a subgroup of the Pîrs of Jerwan, the others being Êsîbiya, 'Omer Khale, and Qedîb el-Ban, E. 34.
Identifications and associations: See above under "General".

Pîr Khanî

General: The eponym of a family of Pîrs. Pîr Khanî and his clan are said to have had close links with the Khalitiyye tribe in the Diyarbakir area. Pîrs of his clan now live in 'Eyn Sifnî, D. 46.

Pîr Omer Khalid, 'Omer Khale

General: The eponym of a subgroup of the Pîrs of Cerwan, the others being Êsîbiya, Ḥajjî Muḥemmed, and Qedîb el-Ban, E. 34.
Functions: The class of Mirebbî claims descent from him, F. 80.
Shrines: At Lalish, D. 184.

Pîr Hajjî 'Elî, Hajial, Hajalî

General: The eponym of a family of Pîrs, whose only known subdivision is that of Pîr Beḥrî, E. 34. A separate group of Pîrs, known as Pîr Alî, may be a subdivision of this family, D. 46.
Miracles or exploits: He was one of the disciples of Sheykh Adi. Sheykh Adi stayed for forty days in his house when he came from Ba'albek, F. 69.
Curative powers: Madness, possession by *jinns*, F. 72; J. 11; O. 12; C.
Shrines: At Lalish.
Identifications and associations: The legend about Sheykh Adi staying in his house for forty days is also told about Sheykh Mushelleḥ (q.v.).

Mem Shivan

General: The eponym of a family of Pîrs, who live at the village called Memê Shivan, D. 45.
Functions: The protector of sheep, J. 10; O. 3.
Shrines: At Lalish. He also established the "wishing Pillar", see above, Ch. 4. A

village in Sheykhan, which contains a number of shrines and is also known as "Little Lalish", is named after him (see above, under "General").

Pîr Beḥrî

General: The eponym of a subdivision of the Pîrs of Pîr Hajjî 'Elî, E. 34.

6. FIGURES BEST KNOWN FOR THEIR LINKS WITH A PARTICULAR FUNCTION

Memê Shivan

See above, under "Eponyms of lineages of Pîrs".

Gavanê Zerzan

Functions: Protector of cattle, J. 11; O. 3.

Other: Furlani's "Katā Qanī Zarzā" (F. 75), who has a shrine near Mt Meqlûb, is probably to be identified with this figure.

Ebû Rîsh

Shrines: At Beḥzane. Those who have killed a man with his help put a bird's wing on its roof (cf. Ar. *rīš*, "feather"), F. 68.

Identifications and associations: Cf. 'Ebd Rish, below.

Sheykh 'Ebrûs

Functions: Lord of thunder and lightning, J. 10.

Pîrê Libnan

General: The name means "Pîr of the Bricks". He is believed to have built many of the shrines of Lalish in the time of Sheykh Adi, PX.

Functions: *Khas* of marriage and domesticity. During the festival of Khidr-Ilyas young men and women pray to him that they may be married to the person they love. If they then dream of drinking water in the house of the beloved the marriage will take place, J. 11. He brings about marriages, PX.

Identifications and associations: He is invoked during the feast of Khidr-Ilyas (J. 11), with whom he appears to have strong links. Khidr-Ilyas is called his *neqîb* (i.e., the servant who must be approached to gain access to the master), T. 9. 39.

Other: One of his epithets is "whose prayers are heard", T. 6. 12. He is also called

"beloved ~ ", T. 9, *passim*. He plays a prominent role in T. 9. Furlani's entry "Pīr Līn" (F. 76) may be based on a misreading of his name.

Derwêsh el-'Erd

General: The name means "Derwish (of the) Earth".

Functions: *Khas* of the Earth, who is invoked during sowing and at burials, J. 11.

Baba Gûshgûsh

General: The name is obviously connected with an Iranian word for "ear", cf. Persian *gūš*. Since the Kurmanji word is *guh*, however, its provenance is not clear.

Curative powers: Disorders of the ears, J. 11.

Pîrê Terjiman

General: He was Sheykh Adi's translator (Arabic-Kurdish). His name occurs in enumerations of holy figures, T. 9. 41; 13. 16.

Sheykh Mushelleḥ, Mishelleḥ

General: The Arabic word *mushallaḥ* denotes a room for undressing in baths (from *šallaḥa* "to denude, despoil"). In Lalish the shrine of Sheykh Mushelleḥ is where pilgrims first go upon arrival, to make donations, cf. above, Ch. 4. The concept of the saint seems to have developed from the function. It is said that, if someone swears a false oath by him, ~ will take away all he posesses, leaving him "denuded". According to legend, one of his tasks was to reward those with whom Sheykh Adi was content and to seize all the possessions of people who displeased the Sheykh, F. 79.

Functions: See above. He is called "the guardian of the Road", C.

Shrines: At Lalish, see above. There is also a shrine to him at 'Eyn Sifnî, F.79.

Other: al-Damlūjī mentions a "*Shaykh Amshallaḥ*", who has a shrine in the village of Ishkiftiyan and for whom a *ṭiwaf* is held, D. 179. This is probably a variant of the same name. Sheykh Adi stayed in ~'s house for forty days when he came from Ba'albek, (cf. Pîr Ḥajjî 'Elî, q.v.), D. 179.

Sitt Nefîse

General: The name means "Lady precious", and denotes the personification of a sacred tree.

Curative powers: Fever, F. 65, 79. Insomnia, E. 74.
Shrines: "A holy fig tree at Ba'shîqe, which cures fever", F. 65, 79. "A sacred olive tree at Ba'shiqe which cures insomnia", E. 74.

Sheykh Bako

Curative powers: Fever, F. 70.
Shrines: At Beḥzanê. Near the actual shrine is a spring of water with a fig tree. Those who have fever go to the tree, fasten a bit of material from their clothes to the tree and feed the fish in the spring. Those who remove bits of material from the tree will be afflicted with fever, F. 70.

Feqîre 'Elî

Shrines: An olive tree in an enclosure is sacred to her, E. 74.

Sheykh Kiras

General: The name means "Lord Shirt", cf. below.
Functions: The Lord of revelations about spirits. He gives information regarding those whose souls have moved on, F. 76. Cf. the Yezidi expression for death and reincarnation: "to change one's shirt" (*kiras gihorrîn*).

Kanî Zerr, Kaniya Zerka

General: The personification of a spring. The name means "yellow spring" or "spring of the yellow ones".
Curative powers: Jaundice. Patients swim in the spring, F. 75.

Lord of Jinns

General: The figure probably evolved from a belief that pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Sheykh Shems could cure possession by *jinns*.
Curative powers: Anxieties, possession by *jinns*, J. 12.
Shrines: "His shrine is in the house of Sheykh Shems", J. 12.
Identifications and associations: He is said to be a follower of Sheykh Shems.

Dawûd, Dawûdê Derman, Pîr Dawûd

General: A *khas* who occupies a prominent position in the Yezidi tradition, but appears to have no shrines. T. 15 is devoted to him.

Characteristic imagery: That of Sheykh Adi's servant. He is a "loyal servant" to Sheykh Adi, T. 15. 1, 2. He is called "the Pîr of solid faith", and was made Pîr of Kirman(shah?), T. 15. 25. Sheykh Adi has a covenant with him, T. 15. 17. Sheykh Adi gives him a gift, T. 15. 24. The name of his steed, Kulbênî, is mentioned, T. 15. 19, 20.

Functions: He is said to be the Leader of the "Forty" (q.v.), Fr. 41-2. But see under "Meḥmed Reshan" and "Ḥesen Meman".

Miracles or exploits: The Zangid Sultan sent him to Sheykh Adi, and he became Adi's follower. The Zangid Sultan cut off his tongue, but Sheykh Adi made it grow again, T. 15. 11f. Sheykh Adi tied the Ethereal Ocean under his arms, T 15. 18. His stomach is an ocean, T. 15. 22.

Identifications and associations: A legend similar to the one about the Ocean attached to Dawûd's person is told about "Sheykh Adi's servant", in connection with Mar Yuḥenna (q.v.).

Melekê Mîran (Melekê Mêran)

General: He is said to be the ancestor of the Yezidis, F. 76.

Miracles or exploits: He was born of a virgin mother during the period of Shehîd b. Jerr, E. 74.

Curative powers: Rheumatism, E. 74.

Shrines: Near Ba'shîqe, F. 76; E. 74. In the stream below the sanctuary there is an oleander where sufferers from rheumatism go. They bring earth from the sanctuary, make a mud pie, rub it on their stomach, tear off a tassel from their head-cloth, which they tie to the shrub, E. 74.

Identifications and associations: For the connections with rheumatism see also under "Sheykh Mûsa Sor" and "Sheykh Hesen".

'Ebdî Resho, 'Ebd Resh

General: This figure has strong links with a stone (F. 67-8), and is reminiscent of Meḥmed Reshan. He is said to have been Sheykh Adi's servant, D. 178.

Shrines: In the village of Kerabeg, F. 67. In the village of Kendale, D. 178.

Identifications and associations: He is a companion of Sheykh Mûsa Sor (q.v.), F. 68.

Shehsiwar

General: The name means "Lord of horsemen".

Functions: Lord of war and horsemanship, J. 11.
Shrines: The Baba Chawûsh's quarters inside the Sanctuary of Sheykh Adi have this name. There is a shrine to him in the village of Beyban, D. 180.

7. Figures of evidently Muslim or Christian origin

Khidr-Ilyas

General: Khidr (Ar. *Khiḍr*) and Ilyas were originally two figures (cf. T. 18. 5), who are now generally thought of as one. The cult clearly has its origin in the Islamic and Christian traditions, F. 74. ~ is "full of mystical power, ready to give all answers", T. 13. 29.
Characteristic imagery: His characteristic epithet is the word *neqîb*, "leader, one through whom one gains admittance to his master", T. 9. 39; 16. 38; cf. 16. 26.
Identifications and associations: Pîrê Libnan (q.v.) is invoked at ~'s festival, J. 11. He is sometimes identified with Sheykh Adi, E. 49. A figure named Khidr is said to be among the nine sons of Sheykh Shems, E. 32.
Other: Khidr is mentioned in T. 9. 31; 13. 28, 30.

Ibrahîm Khelîl

General: He is the Biblical and Qur'anic Abraham. He recognised God as "Truth", T. 1. 42, 43. He preceded Moses and Jesus, T. 1. 44. He disputed with Azir and Nimrud (q.v.), T. 1. 43.

Azir and Nimrud

General: Two figures who worshipped an idol. Ibrahîm Khelîl disputed with them, T. 1. 43.

Mûsa, Moses

General: He is mentioned as coming after Ibrahîm Khelîl, T. 1. 44. He is sometimes identified with Sheykh Fekhr el-Dîn (q.v.), E. 49.
Identifications and associations: See also under "Sheykh Mûsa Sor".

Meḥmedê Nû

General: "The New Muhammad", T. 1. 44.

Ebû Bekr

General: One of the "rightly guided" Caliphs of Islam. He is called "the righteous", T. 9. 28.

Identifications and associations: He is sometimes identified with Sheykh Obekr (q.v.), E. 49.

'Umer b. el-Kheṭṭab

General: One of the "rightly guided" Caliphs of Islam.

Identifications and associations: He is mentioned together with 'Elî (q.v.), T. 9. 29, 30. He is sometimes identified with Naṣir el-Dîn (q.v.), E. 49.

'Elî

General: One of the "rightly guided" Caliphs of Islam and the son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Identifications and associations: He is mentioned in T. 18. 8, and, together with 'Umer (q.v.), in T. 9. 29, 30. He is sometimes identified with Sejadîn (q.v.), E. 49. 'Elî is the name of one of the nine sons of Sheykh Shems, E. 32.

Ḥemze

General: A well-known figure in the Islamic tradition, who is mentioned in T. 18. 8.

Behlûl, Behlûlê Dîn, Behlûlê Dîwane

General: The latter versions of name mean "Behlûl the Mad". He is a well-known figure in the Islamic tradition. Edmonds was told that el-Ḥesen el-Beṣrî received Melek Sheykh Hesen's "secret" in "the time of Behlûl the Mad", E. 33. A "period of Bahlûl" is also known to the Ahl-e Haqq tradition, Hamzeh'ee 1990: 42-4. In Yezidism Behûl is said to be one of the first disciples of Sheykh Adi, F. 70. Many popular tales are told about him, Ritter 1967: 22f.

Characteristic imagery: The righteous madman with whom God is pleased, see Ritter 1976: 22f.

Identifications and associations: He is sometimes identified with Yezîd, E. 49.

'Ebd el-Qadir

General: See under "'Ebd el-Qadir el-Reḥmanî".

Me'rûf el-Kerkhî

General: A well-known Sufi, whose name also occurs in the Yezidi tradition, e.g. in a hymn devoted to Rabi'e (q.v.). He is associated with 'Eqîl Munejjî (q.v.), F. 77.

Weys el-Qeneyrî

General: The Yezidi figure is probably to be identified with Uways al-Qaranī, a pious man from Yemen who lived at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, and is revered in Sufi circles.

Curative powers: Headaches and sore eyes, E. 74.

Shrines: Near Ba'shîqe, E. 74.

Rabi'e el-'Edewiyye

General: Perhaps the greatest female Sufi figure. A Yezidi hymn (*beyt*) is devoted to her (O. and J. Jelîl 1978: 29f), which includes a dialogue between her and "Sheykh Bazîd" (i.e., Bayezîd of Biṣṭam, q.v.). Other prominent Sufi figures, such as Me'rûf el-Kerkhî (q.v.), are also referred to.

Characteristic imagery: A woman saint who only follows God's command, paying no attention to the affairs of this world.

el-Ḥesen el-Beṣrî

General: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was a pious figure (d. 728), who is remembered with respect by Muslims. In Yezidism, he is identified with Sheykh Hesen, F. 73; Ch. 2.

Bayezîd of Biṣṭam

General: An early, 'ecstatic' Sufi, who is mentioned in the Yezidi tradition in association with such Sufis as Rabi'e el-'Edewiyye (q.v.). Furlani's "Sheykh Baba Zayd Bāstāmī" (F. 70) is undoubtedly the same figure.

Mîr Ibrahîm Khurristanî, Brahîmê Adem

General: He is to be identified with the Sufi Ibrāhīm b. Adham, who came from Khorasan. According to legend, the Sufi saint was a prince who abandoned his palace for the mystical quest, Schimmel 1975: 37. The Yezidi Ibrahîm is said to have been a rich man from Khorasan (*Khurristan*, T. 3. 1), who saw God in a dream, abandoned his riches, and became a follower of Sheykh Adi, F. 74.

Characteristic imagery: Rich man turned mystic.

Sheykh Menṣûr el-Ḥellaj, Ḥisênê Ḥellaj

General: al-Ḥajjāj was a Sufi figure perhaps best known because he was executed for his beliefs. In the Yezidi tradition, a *Qewl* is devoted to him, see Silêman and Jindî 1979: 135-9.

Characteristic imagery: That of a martyr.

Miracles or exploits: There is a legend that a girl became pregnant when she saw his severed head, F. 77; in one version (E. 72), she is said to have given birth to 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlânî (q.v.).

Shrines: At Lalish, F. 66.

Sitt Khadîje el-Kubra

General: A figure who owes her origin to the Prophet Muḥammad's first wife, see F. 73.

Shrines: At Ba'shîqe, E. 74.

Bilal el-Ḥebeshî, "Bilal the Ethiopian"

General: I.e., the Prophet Muḥammad's black mu'ezzin Bilāl, whose name occurs in the Yezidi tradition, F. 70.

'Isa, Jesus

General: He is mentioned in T. 1.43.

Identifications and associations: He is sometimes identified with Sheykh Shems, E. 49; F. 81.

The Virgin Mary

General: Isma'îl Beg states that, during the feast of the Dead, a cake or loaf is dedicated to her, F. 77.

Mar Yuḥenna

General: The head of the Christian monastery at Lalish which became the Yezidi sanctuary. Sheykh Adi came to Lalish and performed many miracles. This impressed Mar Yuḥenna, who became his follower. He and his monks were made to wear black as a sign of penitence. The *Feqîrs*, who wear black, are said to be their descendants, F. 82. See also above, p.37f, and below under "Ḥenna and Mar Ḥenna".

Ḥenna and Mar Ḥenna

General: The Christian monastery at Lalish is said to have belonged to ~, see E. 4 and above, Ch.2.
Miracles or exploits: They assumed the shapes of serpents to attack Sheykh Adi, see above, Ch. 2.
Curative powers: Diseases of the mouth, see above, p. 38.
Shrines: Their tombs are said to be located in the sanctuary of Sheykh Adi, F. 72.

Indirîsê Ḥeyyaṭ

General: The name means "Andrew the Taylor". The name is of Christian origin. ~ made Sheykh Adi's ceremonial robes, F. 75.

Mar Gûrgîs

General: A figure of Christian origin, F. 76.
Shrines: According to al-Damlūjī there is a shrine of this name at Lalish, D. 185.

Yoseph Qurînaya

General: The name means "Joseph the Cirenean", and is presumably of Christian origin, F. 82.
Shrines: He has a shrine near Ba'shîqe, F. 82.

Sheykh Mettey

General: The name means "Sheykh Matthew", and is of Christian origin.
Shrines: According to Anastase there is a shrine to this saint somewhere, F. 78. Jebel Meqlûb is known as "the Mountain of Mar Mettey".

8. OTHERS

Sheykh Muḥemmed

General: "An illustrious man", F. 78.
Miracles or exploits: He performed miracles. At Ba'shîqe he fought against "the great Sheykh"; when his head was cut off, he took it under his arm and fought on, F. 78.
Shrines: He was buried near the monastery of Mar Gurgîs, in the Mosul area, and his servant was buried at Ba'shîqe. The first *ṭiwaf* of the year is held in his honour,

F. 78.

Identifications and associations: His wife was Sitt Ḥebîbe (q.v.), F. 72. The *ṭiwaf* at Ba'shîqe is also said to be dedicated to Muḥemmed el-Ḥenefiyye, i.e., the founder of a Muslim school of law, E. 74.

Pîr Sheref

General: T. 13 describes his attempts to catch the divine falcon. He is said to be a descendant of Dawûd, T. 13. 24.

Alû Bekr

General: Very little is known about this figure.

Curative powers: Diseases of the mouth, J. 11.

Shrines: At Lalish.

Identifications and associations: When the Qewwals pronounce the words, *Ya Sheykh Adî, ya Alû Bekr,* this indicates that their recital is finished, C.

Se'd and Mes'ûd, Se'îd and Mes'ûd, Mes'ûd and Musey'id

Characteristic imagery: The only obvious characteristic of these figures is that they are represented as a pair, F. 78.

Shrines: Mes'ûd's shrine is near Beḥzanê; the shrines of Mes'ûd and Musey'id are said to be in Ba'shîqe, F. 78. A *ṭiwaf* is held for Se'îd and Mes'ûd at Beḥzanê, D. 182.

Identifications and associations: Other pairs are Jibra'îl and 'Ezra'îl (q.v.), Sheykh Hesen (q.v.) and Melek Sheykh Hesen. Figures whose chief characteristic is that they are described as a pair are also found in the traditions of the Ahl-e Haqq and of Zoroastrianism, K. 71.

Pîr Ḥesen Jelal, Jellê

General: He was a son of Sheykh Shems, and married Khatûna Fekhre, PX. He played the *def* and *shibab* for Sheykh Adi, F. 72.

Sheykh Shelal

General: He is said to have received the *khirqe* as a leader of mankind, T. 3. 13. He is possibly to be identified with Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

Lakmadîn Baba

General: He was the guardian of Sheykh Adi's secrets, i.e., his secretary, F. 76.

Sheykh "Son of the Road"

General: A figure, thought to be of Christian origin (F. 82), about whom little is known.

Miracles or exploits: He is said to have subjugated Babylon, F. 82.

Shrines: He is reported to have a shrine at Lalish, F. 82.

Pîr Bûb

General: He is believed to have been one of Sheykh Adi's intimate friends, F. 70.

Identifications and associations: The MR states that he is identical with Be'elzebub, the god of Ahab (G. 204), but the claim may well have originated with a nineteenth century scribe.

Bûbê Qelender

General: The name is mentioned by Furlani (F. 71). It seems likely that he is to be identified with Pîr Bûb.

Mem Kadrî

General: He may owe his origin to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, although he is probably conceived of now as a separate figure.

Shrines: Near Ba'shîqe, F. 76.

Meḥmedê Reben

Shrines: At Lalish. Nothing further is known.

Bû Qetar Baba

General: He is believed to have been Sheykh Adi's representative in the Mardin area, F. 71.

Shrines: Furlani states that a major shrine near Mardin is dedicated to him, F. 71. It is not known whether this sanctuary still exists.

Dayka Jakan

General: According to Giamil (1900: 35), this name means "beautiful woman" (normal Kurd. for "beautiful mother" would be *dayka jiwan).*

Shrines: Near Beḥzanê, F. 71.

Sitt Ḥebîbe, Marta Ḥebîbta, "the Beloved Lady"

General: The wife of Sheykh Muḥemmed (q.v.), F. 72; Giamil 1900: 35.[9]

Shrines: Near Beḥzanê, F. 72. In Ba'shîqe, E. 74.

Ḥekkî Fîres

General: His ancestor was Luqman, his descendants cure wounds with drugs and aromatic plants, F. 72.

Curative powers: Wounds, F. 72.

el-Khasiyye, Khasse

General: A female saint whose name is reminiscent of the Arabic word for lettuce, (Ar. *khass)*. In the MR this is said to be the reason for the taboo on eating lettuce, G. 203; F. 74.

Shehîd b. Jerr

General: See above, Ch. 2.

Shrines: He has a tomb and a *qubbe* at Ba'shîqe, E. 74.

Sheykh Ḥentûsh

General: One of the first disciples of Sheykh Adi, F. 73.

Ebû 'l-Qasim

General: The son of Sheykh Ḥentûsh; an early follower of Sheykh Adi, F. 68.

Sheykh 'Eqîl Munejjî

General: One of Sheykh Adi's first disciples, F.69.

Identifications and associations: He is associated wirth Me'rûf el-Kerkhî (q.v.), F. 69. The name may conceivably derive from that of 'Uqayl al-Mambijî, cf. Lescot 1938: 23, 231.

Notes

[1] For the sake of brevity and clarity references will here be given in the text. A = Anastase 1899; C = Chîcho, verbally; D = al-Damlūjī 1949; Dr = Drower 1941; E = Edmonds 1967; Emp = Empson 1928; F = Furlani 1936; Fr = Frayha 1946; G = Guest 1987; J = Jindy 1992; K = Kreyenbroek 1992; L = Lescot 1938; MR = *Meshef Resh*; O = Othman 1993; T = text, below; PGK = Kreyenbroek, eyewitness account; PX = Pîr Khidr Silêman, verbally.

[2] Although there can hardly be any doubt that most of the terms given here are synonyms, it seems preferable to discuss them separately. References are given to the words as they occur in the Kurdish text; the translation normally gives English terms.

[3] References are given to the words as they occur in the Kurdish text; in most cases the translation gives English terms.

[4] The Zoroastrian Mithra is said to have "ten thousand eyes", *Yasht* 10. 7, 91, 141; 6. 5; *Yasna* 1. 3; 2. 3. There may also be a connection with the Evil Eye.

[5] The word *dîwan* denotes the assembly of male followers, dependents and guests of a great man, who are required by Kurdish etiquette to pay regular visits to him, see Van Bruinessen 1992: 82-5.

[6] Or "the times" ("i tempi" in F. 81).

[7] al-Damlūjī (1949: 183) gives his name as *Khetmî*.

[8] According to one account (E. 32), the nine sons of Sheykh Shems are: Amadîn, Babik, Khiḍr, 'Elî, Evdal, Babadîn, Hewind, Ḥesen and Toqil.

[9] The statement that she was Sheykh Muḥemmed's mother (F. 78, which refers to Giamil), must be a mistake.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL ORGANISATION: TITLES, GROUPS AND FUNCTIONS

The text of the "Evening Prayer" (T. 7. 10) implies that the Yezidi equivalent of the five 'pillars' of Islam is the obligation on each believer to honour his relationship with five figures: the Sheykh, Pîr, Mirebbî, Hosta, and the 'Brother of the Hereafter'. In modern practice only three of these—the Sheykh, Pîr, and the 'Brother (or Sister) of the Hereafter'—play a role in the lives of most people, but the statement is significant in that it mentions five different social ties where Islam makes more varied demands.[1] Just as places typically provide a focus for the Yezidis' feelings of devotion, the obligation to maintain an elaborate set of social relationships constitutes an important element of the Yezidi concept of religious duty. The following leading figures, groups and institutions play a relatively prominent role in the Yezidi tradition, and will be discussed below: the Prince and his family; the Pismîrs; the Baba Sheykh; the Pêshîmam; the Sheykh el-Wezîr; the Baba Chawûsh; the Sheykhs; the Pîrs; the Qewwals; the Feqîrs; the Kocheks;[2] the Mirîds; the Mijêwir; the Ferrash; the Kebane and the Fiqreyyat; the 'Brother (or Sister) of the Hereafter'; the Mirebbî and the Hosta; the Kerîf.

The information presented here derives almost exclusively from sources describing the state of affairs in the Sheykhan area, with some reference to Sinjar and Syria. Some differences may well exist between the institutions, customs and terminology described here and those of other Yezidi communities.

THE PRINCE AND HIS FAMILY

The Prince (*Mîr*) of Sheykhan is the religious and secular head of the entire Yezidi nation.[3] He is traditionally regarded as the vicegerent of Sheykh Adi, and also of Melek Tawus (see below), and his person is felt to be sacred. Traditionally, his clothes may only be washed by a Kochek, and many things which had come into contact with him had to be dealt with in a special way.[4] In theory, the powers of the Prince are almost unlimited; he cannot be removed and has the right to excommunicate any believer at will.[5] The Mîrs of Sheykhan were traditionally venerated by the entire community,[6] although in practice their power was probably only effective in and around the Sheykhan area, where they had been largely autonomous until they became subject to the rulers of Amadiyya in the late eighteenth century.[7] In 1930, a British proposal to remove an unsatisfactory Prince provoked a furious reaction from the main leaders of the community.[8] Currently, internecine squabbles and the harsh political realities have had the effect of detracting somewhat from the authority of the Princely family, but even so some of its members are still very highly respected. The revenue of the Prince consists of the donations to three of the seven *senjaqs*,[9] and of a share of the pious gifts to the shrines of Sheykh Adi and Sheykh Shems at Lalish.

The Prince and his household reside in the Castle at Ba'drê. According to the *Sheykhan Memorial*,[10] when a Prince dies the new incumbent must be chosen from the Princely family by "all the Yezidi chiefs or their representatives".[11] The office has been in the hands of the Chol family at least from the early eighteenth century onward.[12] Legend, in fact, links this family directly to Sheykh Adi.[13] According to one account,[14] when Sheykh Adi was dying, the three branches of Sheykhs, Shemsanis, Adanis and Qatanis, were quarreling about his succession. In answer to Sheykh Adi's prayers, God sent Melek Tawus to settle the matter. The Peacock Angel came to the earth, and created a man on the spot. This was Chol Beg, who was created from the "void" (*chol*). His descendants, the Princely family, are therefore the representatives of Melek Tawus on earth.[15] The Chol dynasty is widely believed to be linked to the Qatani Sheykhs (who claim indirect descent from Sheykh Adi), and members may only marry within the family, with the Pismîrs (see below), or with the 'Ebd el-Qadir branch of Qatani Sheykhs.[16]

THE PISMIRS

According to al-Damlūjī,[17] the Pismîrs constitute a separate group. The name means "descendants of the Prince"[18] and, like the Princely family, the Pismîrs trace their lineage to Sheykh Obekr. According to the tradition their ancestor was Sheykh Menṣûr b. Obekr, the brother of Sheykh Melik, who was the Princes' forebear. The group intermarries with the Princely family. Formerly, it seems, a member of this group resided in every major village of Sheykhan,[19] as a figure of authority, and members of the clan gathered at Ba'drê each Friday to discuss current affairs with the Mîr. The Pismîrs hardly seem to play a prominent role in modern Yezidi life. They are seldom referred to in Yezidis' discussions on matters of religion, and equally rarely in the literature.[20]

THE BABA SHEYKH

Many Yezidis regard the Baba Sheykh as the spiritual leader of the faith, although it could be argued that his authority is subordinate to that of the Prince even in spiritual matters. As his title indicates, the "Father Sheykh" is the leader of the Sheykhs. His responsibility for the spiritual side of the faith is reflected, moreover, by his traditional function as supervisor of the Kocheks.[21] The incumbent must belong to the Fekhr el-Dîn branch of the Shemsani Sheykhs. The office often passes from father to son, but the appointment is formally in the hands of the Prince.[22] The Baba Sheykh traditionally leads a pious and austere life, fasting for forty days of the year and abstaining from alcohol.[23] He has a special seat at the Sanctuary in Lalish, and his presence there at the time of the Festival of the Assembly is essential for the validity of the ceremonies.[24] In modern usage the title *Ekhtiyarê Mergehê,* "Old Man of the Sanctuary", also refers to the Baba Sheykh.[25]

THE PESHIMAM

An important aspect of this function, it seems, is that the incumbent must be a descendant of Sheykh Hesen.[26] Thus, each of the three main branches of Sheykhs is represented by a leading religious figure: the Qatanis by the Prince, the Shemsanis by the Baba Sheykh, and the Adanis, who claim descent from Hesen, by the Pêshîmam. That this was indeed one of the grounds for instituting the office is suggested by local traditions, some of which closely associate the function with the clan, and by the nature of the Pêshîmam's functions (see below). According to

Edmonds,[27] some Yezidis claim that the office is a recent innovation, originating in the year 1892, when 'Umar Wahbī Pasha attacked the Yezidi community. The creation of this function, it was said, was intended to placate the Muslims. The institution of a Yezidi office would have been highly unlikely to have such an effect, however, and the story may not be true.[28] It does, however, seem to reflect a sense among the Yezidis that the function of the Pêshîmam, unlike that of the Baba Sheykh for example, is hardly one of traditional significance.

The *Sheykhan Memorial*[29] states that the Pêshîmam "receives his pay from the the alms offered by the community in the name of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī", and that he is the authority for celebrating marriages and fixing dowries. Traditionally, the right to celebrate weddings belongs to the Adani Sheykhs.[30] Similarly, it has been claimed that the Pêshîmam has a monopoly on literacy,[31] which is more often said to be a privilege of the Adanis as a group.[32] Furthermore, the Pêshîmam leads the *ṣalāt*-like prayer on *Leylet el-Qedr*, which is performed by the Adanis but rejected by the Shemsanis.[33] It has further been noted that Shemsani Sheykhs tend to be contemptuous of this office, which presumably reflects their traditional antagonism to the Adanis.[34] All these considerations seem to confirm the impression that the Pêshîmam is first and foremost a representative of the Adanis.

Again according to the *Sheykhan Memorial*, the Pêshîmam is appointed by the Prince.[35] Edmonds states that, in 1944, the Pêshîmam and two deputies were resident at Beḥzanê, Ba'shîqe and Sirêskî respectively, and that there was a third deputy in Northern Sinjar.[36] It thus seems that such deputies could also be given the title of *pêshîmam*. Lescot mentions the presence of one *pêshîmam* in Sheykhan, one in Sinjar, and possibly a third near Mayafariqîn.[37] Isma'îl Beg recommended that a *pêshîmam* should be elected for each group of five villages.[38] Describing the order of precedence of dignitaries in the procession which takes place during the Feast of the Assembly, two very knowledgeable informants[39]—admittedly after some discussion— mentioned two *pêshîmams*, the "Pêshîmam of the Emîr el-Ḥejj", and the "Pêshîmam of the Baba Sheykh". It may be legitimate to conclude that the title *pêshîmam* can be used relatively loosely, which again suggests that, in the minds of many Yezidis, the prestige of the principal Pêshîmam is hardly comparable to that of the Baba Sheykh.

THE SHEYKH EL-WEZIR

One of the signatories of the *Sheykhan Memorial*, whom Edmonds calls "the senior

representative of the family of Shaykh Shams", styled himself "Wezîr of Sheykh Adi", or "Wezîr of Sheykhan".[40] It seems probable that a title containing the word "wezîr", which is a characteristic epithet of Sheykh Shems himself,[41] is often given to the figure who is felt to be the leader of the Shemsani Sheykhs (apart from the Baba Sheykh, who is the head of all Sheykhs). In an enumeration of leading Yezidi dignitaries, Ishak of Bartella mentions a title which has been translated from Syriac as "Sheykh General";[42] the original title may perhaps have been Sheykh el-Wezîr.[43] This title is currently used by a most prestigious figure who, during the Festival of the Assembly of 1992, acted as guardian of the Shrine of Sheykh Shems at Lalish.[44] His function was described to me as follows:[45] "He is the representative (*na'ib*) of the leader of the Yezidis—just as Kheyrî Beg is the deputy (*mendûb*) of Teḥsîn Beg,[46] so the Sheykh el-Wezîr is the *mendûb* in Sinjar." The present Sheykh's full name is Khidr, son of Khudêda, son of Hemo Shêro, son of Lewend Bozo Shamî. Both his family and his followers take great pride in his descent from the legendary Hemo Shêro, who fought with the British against the Ottomans in 1918, and was given the title "Chief of the Mountain" (i.e., Jebel Sinjar).[47] While the family may thus originally have derived its prestige from Hemo Shêro's political status, its authority now seems to lie mainly in the religious sphere.

THE BABA CHAWUSH

According to the *Sheykhan Memorial*, the Baba Chawûsh is "the doorkeeper and servant of the Baba Sheykh at Sheykh Adi", and is appointed by the Prince.[48] He may be chosen, it seems, from any section of the community.[49] He is the guardian of the Shrine, who is expected to lead a life of great piety and absolute chastity,[50] and whose authority in most matters concerning the Shrine appears to be well-nigh absolute. In Edmonds' time, the Baba Chawûsh wore an orange stole.[51] The present incumbent is normally dressed entirely in white, with a black cummerbund (*rist*), which is dyed with a substance made from the sacred *zirgûz* tree.[52]

THE SHEYKHS

The obligation of obedience to a chosen religious leader is found both in pre-modern Zoroastrianism[53] and in the Sufi Orders, but the elaborate Yezidi system of affiliations between members of different castes and groups appears to be matched

only by that of the Ahl-e Haqq. Each Yezidi—including the Sheykhs and Pîrs themselves—must have a Sheykh and a Pîr. It is not known whether choice ever played a role in the selection of these spiritual leaders. All extant sources describe a rigid system of predetermined mutual relations, in which the individual's right to choose plays only a very modest role.[54] Every Sheykh has a number of lay families who are his *mirîd* or "followers"; in some cases he may also act as Sheykh to members of other branches of the sheykhly caste,[55] and to Pîrs belonging to certain families.[56] On the death of a Sheykh, these followers are divided among his heirs along with the rest of his possessions.[57] The official duty of the Sheykh is to act as a spiritual guide to his *mirîds*. He may compose prayers for them (see Ch. 4), or impose taboos (Ch. 6), and is expected to participate on their behalf in the performance of religious rites, such as those of birth, marriage and death. In return, the *mirîd* pays his Sheykh a certain sum of money each year,[58] shows him great respect, and to some extent obeys his authority.

As we saw earlier (Ch. 4), many Yezidis feel that, in honouring the living Sheykh, they are worshipping the holy man who is the eponym of his lineage. The sheykhly caste is divided into three groups, each of which has special link with one of the legendary figures of old. These groups, in turn, are subdivided into a number of branches and sub-branches. The Shemsanis claim descent from the four sons of Êzdîna Mîr, the Adanis from Sheykh Hesen, and the Qatanis have a special link with Sheykh Adi, claiming descent from his relatives.[59] The principal branches of the Shemsani Sheykhs are:[60] Sheykh Shems, with subdivisions named after his descendants Amadîn and Babik;[61] Sheykh Fekhr el-Dîn, with the subdivisions Mend and Fekhre; Sheykh Sejadîn; and Sheykh Naṣir el-Dîn.[62] The main branch of the Adanis is the family of Sheykh Hesen. Subdivisions named after his descendants are: Sheref el-Dîn; Ibrahîm el-Khetnî;[63] and Sheykh Mûsa.[64] As Edmonds points out,[65] *mirîds* of the Adanis usually claim affiliation to Sheykh Hesen, rather than to one of his sons. Apart from the family of the Prince and the Pismîrs, the branches of the Qatani Sheykhs are: Sheykh Obekr; 'Ebd el-Qadir Reḥmanî;[66] and Isma'îl 'Enzel.[67]

Each of these three groups of Sheykhs is endogamous.[68] Traditionally there is a certain rivalry between them, and also between their followers.[69] It is not unusual to hear remarks such as, "Before Sheykh Adi came along, the Prince was a Shemsani; it was only when he came that the Qatanis usurped the office", or "The

Qatanis are lying when they claim to be descended from Sheykh Adi; everyone knows that their ancestor was Sheykh Adem."[70] There appear to be some minor differences in attitude, at least between the Adanis and Shemsanis. As we saw above, on *Leylet el-Qedr* the Pêshîmam, who represents the Adanis, leads the community in a slightly modified form of the Muslim *ṣalāt*. At one point, the Shemsanis then come and seize their prayer-mats, which they hide in the Sanctuary of Sheykh Shems.[71] It is generally acknowledged that this custom has its origin in a real disagreement between the groups in the past (see further Ch. 6). Furthermore, the right to literacy is traditionally said to have been confined to the Adani Sheykhs.[72] Given the fact that, in the early centuries of Yezidism, the Kurds presumably associated the notion of a written religious tradition chiefly with Islam[73]—and that many Yezidis must strongly have objected to it, witness the traditional ban on writing—one might hazard the guess that the Adanis were less inclined than the Shemsanis to reject practices associated with Islam.[74] On the links between individual families of Sheykhs and Pîrs see below.

THE PIRS

Although the Pîrs constitute one of the most important castes of the Yezidi community, their actual functions do not appear to be well circumscribed. The definition of the Pîr as being "to some degree an understudy of the Sheykh",[75] does not seem inappropriate. That the Pîrs' status is inferior to that of the Sheykhs is perhaps most clearly suggested by the fact that Yezidis give their Pîr about half the amount of the dues of their Sheykh.[76] Some deny any such inferiority,[77] however, and in practice a Pîr can perform most of the duties of a Sheykh if the latter is not available.[78] This lack of an obvious functional distinction between the two castes may be the reason why some documents written by Yezidis do not differentiate clearly between them.[79]

Nevertheless, every Yezidi must have a Pîr as well as a Sheykh, and the system of relationships between families of Pîrs and Sheykhs, and between those and other sections of the community, is part of the intricate network of social relationships that is characteristic of Yezidi society. It has been noted that, while sheykhly families have names of Arabic origin—which imply descent from figures who, historically, were relatives of Sheykh Adi—families of Pîrs tend to have Kurdish names.[80] The main reason for any difference in status between Sheykhs and Pîrs

may therefore simply be one of ancestry, the Pîrs being the descendants of prominent companions or disciples of Sheykh Adi while the eponyms of the sheykhly lineages were his relatives.

The Pîrs are divided into four main branches:[81] Hesen Meman,[82] with the subdivisions Ḥesen Elka and Khetîbesî; Pîr Afat, with the subdivisions Meḥmed Reshan, Buwal and Pîr Derbês; Pîr Jerwan, with the subdivisions Êsîbiya, Ḥajjî Muḥemmed, 'Omer Khale and Qedîb el-Ban; Pîr Ḥajjî 'Elî, with the subdivision of Pîr Beḥrî. The affiliations of the families of Memê Shivan and Pîr Khanî are not known.[83] Generally, Pîrs are free to marry members of any Pîr family. Exceptions are the Pîrs of Ḥesen Meman, who must marry within their own family, and those of Jerwan and Meḥmed Reshan, who are regarded as being of the same status and may intermarry between themselves, but cannot marry members of other clans.[84] The relations between individual families of Sheykhs and Pîrs are strictly governed by tradition. Our knowledge of these links is limited, but they do not appear to follow a discernible pattern.[85] It seems likely, therefore, that such relations between 'priestly' families were determined by accidents of history which can no longer be traced.

THE QEWWALS

The Qewwals, the "reciters" who tour the country with the *senjaq*, recite the *Qewls*, play sacred music on the *def* and *shibab*, and preach to the congregation (Ch. 4), constitute a distinct class. They are drawn from two families, the Dimlî, who speak Kurmanji, and the Tazhî, whose first language is a dialect of Arabic.[86] Both families live in the villages of Ba'shîqe and Beḥzanê.[87] In the late nineteenth century, there were just under forty Qewwals.[88] It has been claimed[89] that Qewwals must be able to read and write, and that those who remain illiterate rank as laymen, although their descendants may again become Qewwals. While it is true that the instruction of Qewwals is said to be in the hands of a branch of the Adani Sheykhs,[90] who claim the privilege of literacy, it seems possible that the traditional criterion was training in a more general sense, rather than learning to read.[91] In the past the Qewwals are said to have undergone a rigorous training from an early age, some learning to recite *Qewls*, others to play the sacred instruments.[92] At the end of this period of instruction they were examined by the Baba Sheykh.[93] The standard of training is now said to be rapidly deteriorating.[94] The transmission of the sacred

texts, it seems, is largely in the hands of dedicated volunteers; certainly it is no longer the exclusive province of Qewwals.[95]

THE FEQIRS

The Order of Feqîrs cuts across the dividing lines between the classes. It includes some sheykhly families (Obekr and Ibrahîm Khetnî), a family of Pîrs ('Omer Khale), and laymen (notably the Dînadî tribe of Sinjar, who correspond to the Rûbenishtî of Sheykhan and are affiliated to Sheykh Mend, and also the Êd Zêro and Êd Jindo, branches of the Sharqî tribe, whose Sheykhs are those of Babik and Obekr respectively).[96] Admission to the Order is by initiation.[97] Before they are initiated, the children of Feqîrs have no special status—being regarded as Sheykhs, Pîrs, or laymen depending on the original status of their family—and membership does not affect their status as regards the rules of marriage.[98] It seems clear, therefore, that the Order of Feqîrs was originally not a rigid caste, but rather an institution open to all pious Yezidis.[99] Michel Febvre,[100] a seventeenth-century traveller who was well acquainted with a Syrian community of Yezidis, described a society which apparently knew only two groups, the "whites", or laymen, and the "blacks",[101] or Feqîrs. It seems that, in this community, any laymen could be initiated into the Order of Feqîrs provided he had undergone the required preparatory training.[102] Siouffi,[103] writing in the late nineteenth century, still states that any Yezidi may become a Feqîr, a claim that may have been based on information describing a traditional rather than an actual state of affairs. The information of both sources, however, confirms that the Order was once open to all, and that the present structure represents a relatively late development, perhaps influenced by the model of other hereditary castes.

The main role of the Feqîrs in Yezidi society, it seems, is to be paragons of piety. In theory, they should fast for long periods,[104] abstain from smoking and drinking, sleep on hard beds and wear coarse woollen clothes.[105] They may not indulge in any aggressive behaviour.[106] The Feqîrs are regarded by other Yezidis with respect, or indeed with fear. The least act of violence against them was traditionally held to endanger one's fate in the hereafter, and if a Feqîr were to attack another Yezidi, it seems, the latter would do nothing to defend himself.[107] It is also said that Feqîrs may requisition anything they please from the houses of their coreligionists.[108] Whatever the truth of such stories, they can at least be regarded as

illustrations of the community's attitudes towards this group.

Both the person and the robes of Feqîrs are regarded as sacred. Special rules govern the handling of their facial hair, and their corpses.[109] Their tunics (*khirqe*), which are thought of as replicas of the *khirqe* of Sheykh Adi, are particularly venerated.[110] The traditional garb of Feqîrs consists of the following items:[111] a black felt cap, with a heavy black turban wound around it; a shirt or tunic (*khirqe*) of black wool, whose neck-line has a different shape from that of the 'sacred' shirt (*girêvan*) worn by other Yezidis;[112] a plaited cummerbund (*qemerbest*),[113] worn around the tunic; a pair of trousers; a woollen mantle, worn over the *khirqe*.[114] Under his clothes, hung around the neck next to the skin, a Feqîr must wear a black woollen cord (*meḥek, meftûl*). Both *qemerbest* and *meḥek* must always be worn, even when sleeping.[115]

The leader of the Order is known as the "Steward of the Kitchen"[116] (*metbekhchî*), or "Gatekeeper" (*serderî*)[117] of the House of Sheykh Adi. He is appointed by the Prince.[118] In Siouffi's time, it seems, a leader of the Order, who was referred to as *Kek* ("brother"), lived in Aleppo.[119]

THE KOCHEKS

The Kocheks, whose title means "little one", form a non-hereditary group whose members, it seems, may come from any caste.[120] In the late nineteenth century, there were some two to three hundred Kocheks.[121] According to the *Sheykhan Memorial*,[122] "They are the outdoor servants of Sheykh Adi. They fetch wood, draw water, and so on, under the authority of the Baba Sheykh. They have no alms allotted to them." Like the Feqîrs,[123] they are known for their piety and supererogatory works, such as long periods of fasting.[124] One of their tasks consists of participation in a seven-day occasion, known as "the Road of the Qewwals".[125] For this function the Kocheks alone are summoned to come to Sheykh Adi, to cut wood on the mountains and carry it to the Sanctuary. Each Kochek is given a hatchet and a length of rope for this work. They must keep the rope by them all the time, as it is a symbol of their sacred task.[126]

The Kocheks also have another function. The visionaries, diviners and miracle-workers of the community come from this group.[127] Their powers can be used to foretell how the soul of a dead person will reincarnate, or for purposes of sorcery, healing, and predicting and averting calamities.[128] They are said to communicate

with the 'World of the Unseen' through dreams and trances.[129] Ishak of Bartella[130] recounts that, before the ritual procession of *Jezhna 'Erefat*,[131] Sheykhs, Qewwals, and Kocheks gather at Sheykh Adi and tell one another about their experiences in previous lives. The story was probably inspired to a large extent by the mystique surrounding the Kocheks. Some Kocheks have used their status to achieve high political or religious standing in the community.[132] It is said that the taboo on the colour blue is based on the vision of a Kochek,[133] and the miracles and exploits of some Kocheks are recounted long after their death.[134]

THE MIRIDS

A term of Sufi origin, the word *mirîd* denotes the "disciple" of a Master. Since all men must have a Sheykh, Sheykhs and Pîrs are the Mirîds of a Sheykh. Generally, however, the word is used to denote those who do not belong to one of the 'priestly' castes, the laymen or commoners.

THE MIJEWIR

The word, which means "neighbour", most often denotes the custodian of a local shrine, who must belong to a family of Sheykhs or Pîrs.[135] In villages, the Mijêwirs generally act as parish priests, organising the *ṭiwaf*,[136] officiating at funerals, etc.[137] The custodians who welcome pilgrims at the shrines of Lalish can also be referred to by this title.

Edmonds[138] mentions a "Mijêwar branch of the Pîr Buwal family", one of whose members claimed that the "professional Baptist" at the Kaniya Sipî is always a Mijêwir. al-Damlūjī,[139] on the other hand, states that the Buwal Pîrs are descended from Derwêsh, the Mijêwir of 'Eyn Sifnî. In the light of these two statements, it seems probable that Derwêsh was the ancestor of a lineage of the Buwal Pîrs which adopted the name of Mijêwir. Lescot's[140] somewhat surprising description of the Mijêwirs as a "caste", all of whose Sinjari members live in one village, may be due to a confusion between the word *mijêwir* as a title denoting a function, and the name of a lineage of Pîrs.[141]

THE FERRASH

This term, which means "servant", generally denotes a small group of attendants of the Shrine of Sheykh Adi who perform such tasks as lighting the lamps of the

Sanctuary, and the small flames lit at dusk in various places during holy days. Formerly, the words *ferrash* and *chawûsh* appear to have been used more or less synonymously.[142] Edmonds reports that the title "ferrash" can be used to denote the Leader of the Feqîrs (i.e., the Metbekhchî, see above).[143]

THE KEBANE AND THE FIQREYYAT

The word *kebane* is the Kurdish equivalent of Persian *kadbānū*, "lady",[144] and is used to denote the 'mother superior' of the *fiqreyyat*, or 'nuns'.[145] These women must be celibate—i.e., unmarried or widowed—and serve the Shrine of Sheykh Adi by performing such tasks as sweeping certain parts of the Sanctuary.[146] In 1992 there were only two *fiqreyyat* in Lalish.[147]

THE 'BROTHER (OR SISTER) OF THE HEREAFTER'

It is one of the five obligations on a Yezidi to choose a 'Brother (or Sister) of the Hereafter'[148] from a sheykhly family.[149] A man normally chooses a 'Brother', and a woman a 'Sister', but it is permitted to depart from this rule. The choice must be made during or after puberty, and the agreement is traditionally concluded with a simple ceremony, held preferably at Lalish during the Festival of the Assembly. It is believed that the ties between the two existed before this life, and will endure after it.[150] On a more mundane level, the 'Brother' or 'Sister' has certain tasks to perform at rites of passage, and must help the layman in every way. In return, he or she receives regular offerings of money, and can expect help and service from the lay person. On a similar institution among the Ahl-e Haqq, the *Sharṭ wa Eqrār*, see above, p. 53.

THE MIREBBI AND THE HOSTA

These figures, the "tutor" and the "master", are mentioned in the list of five obligatory relationships. Modern Yezidis, however, are at a loss to explain the meaning of the terms.[151]

THE KERIF

Although this is not an exclusively Yezidi institution,[152] it is certainly one of the social relationships deeply affecting the life of members of the community. The institution of *kerafet* denotes the relationship between an older male and and a

younger, who has been circumcised on the other's knees. Far-reaching and life-long obligations of mutual help and support arise from this relationship. The two families involved may not intermarry for seven generations,[153] and the Kerîf is generally chosen from a group with whom intermarriage would in any case be impossible, such as a caste other than one's own or a Muslim family.[154] Conversely, a Muslim may have a Yezidi Kerîf.[155]

Notes

[1] Viz the confession of the faith, prayer, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage.

[2] Except for the Pismîrs and Pîrs, these titles are mentioned in a document prepared by Yezidi leaders for the British authorities in Iraq in 1930, and published in Edmonds 1967: 25-7.

[3] According to Furlani (1937a: 158), the Prince is also known as "the Prince of the Pilgrimage" (*emîr el-ḥejj* or *mîr ḥejj*). Edmonds (1967: 30), however, states that this title is given each year to the member of the Mîr's family who is appointed to take charge of the organisation of the Festival of the Assembly.

[4] Siouffi 1882: 265-6. According to Siouffi, even the lice from the Prince's head had to be squashed while still in place, rather than removed and thrown on the floor, since they had ingested his blood.

[5] Lescot 1938: 85.

[6] Lescot 1938: 85.

[7] See Lescot 1938: 124; Guest 1987: 57.

[8] See Edmonds 1967: 8-9.

[9] The *Sheykhan Memorial* (Edmonds 1967: 25-6) states that three *senjaqs* belong to the Prince.

[10] See Edmonds 1967: 25.

[11] In practice popular regard and intrigue within the family both appear to play a role. On the latter see Guest 1987: 159-86.

[12] See Guest 1987: 283.

[13] See, e.g., Lescot 1938: 85-6.

[14] Edmonds 1967: 9.

[15] The connection between the emergence of the Princely family and tensions between groups of Sheykhs also plays a role in the account Pîr Khidr Silêman gave me in September 1992: "Originally the Prince was of the Shemsani clan, but then Sheykh Adi came and gave the office to the Adanis. So there were tensions between those clans, and a third group, the Qatanis, managed to seize the leadership."

[16] Lescot 1938: 85, n.1; Furlani 1937a: 158.

[17] al-Damlūjī 1949: 37-8.

[18] al-Damlūjī rejects this etymology.

[19] al-Damlūjī simply states that the Pismîrs resided "in every major village", but this seems unlikely to be true of, e.g., Armenia or indeed Eastern Anatolia.

[20] In discussing their role, al-Damlūjī uses the word "formerly".

[21] See al-Damlūjī 1949: 40. On the Kocheks see pp. 134-5,

[22] See Edmonds 1967: 33.

[23] al-Damlūjī 1949: 40.

[24] In 1992 the Baba Sheykh, who resides in territory held by the Iraqi Government while Lalish lies in the 'Safe Haven', was unable to come to the Shrine at this time. The same prohibition affected a number of other figures. It appeared to be largely on account of the absence of the Baba Sheykh, however, that the authorities declared that the 'official' ceremonies of the Festival (*resmiyyat*) could not be performed.

[25] See Silêman and Jindî 1979: 193. An older source (see Furlani 1937a: 162; below, n. 31), apparently uses this title for the Pêshîmam. The title is referred to by Ishak of Bartella (see Giamil 1900: 58; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 264), and in T. 7. 6, below.

[26] Lescot 1938: 88. al-Damlūjī 1949: 38-9.

[27] Edmonds 1967: 33.

[28] It is not uncommon to find tales linking the institution or abolition of offices or ceremonies to acts of persecution in the past. Pîr Khidr Silêman told me that the weekly religious meetings of Yezidis (see above, Ch. 2 with n. 74; Ch. 3 with n. 65) had been discontinued because of the

attack of the Bey of Rowanduz in 1832.

29 Edmonds 1967: 26.

30 So Lescot 1938: 88 with n. 3. Lescot remarks that, in practice, each Yezidi goes to his own Sheykh for this purpose, but that some also ask for the blessing of an Adani.

31 Nuri Pasha in Furlani 1937a: 162. The title used there for the Pêshîmam is *ekhtiyarê mergehê*, see above, n. 25.

32 See under "the Sheykhs".

33 See al-Damlūjī 1949: 39, and pp. 131, 157.

34 Edmonds 1967: 31. On this antagonism see p. 130f, and Edmonds, *ibid.*

35 Edmonds 1967: 26. Lescot (1938: 88, n. 5); on the other hand, claims that he is elected.

36 Edmonds 1967: 33.

37 Lescot 1938: 88, n. 5. Lescot's statement that the Pêshîmam of Sheykhan has the title of Baba Sheykh and represents the highest spiritual authority after the Prince, is clearly based on a misunderstanding. al-Damlūjī (1949: 197) also mentions the existence of a Sinjari Pêshîmam, who is an Adani but does not have the same status as the "Pêshîmam of the Sanctuary".

38 Lescot 1938: 88, n. 5.

39 Viz Pîr Khidr Silêman and Sheykh Eydo Baba Sheykh, the son of the previous Baba Sheykh, verbally in October 1992. Layard (1853: 81-2) mentions a *pêshnemaz*, or "leader of prayer", who walked at the head of this procession, and clearly held a prominent position in the community. According to my informants, in modern practice the procession is led by a Feqîr, who is followed by the "two Pêshîmams". It is possible therefore, but far from certain, that the term *pêshnemaz* was used as a synonym of *pêshîmam*.

40 Edmonds 1967: 8 and 27 respectively.

41 See above, p. 97.

42 Giamil 1900: 58; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 264.

43 For Ishak's work see Giamil 1900: 58; Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 264. The passage mentions the *Emîr el-Ḥejj* (see above, n. 3), the *Ekhtiyarê Mergehê* (see above, under "the Baba Sheykh"), a "Great Pîr" (i.e., presumably, the Pîrs' equivalent to the Baba Sheykh), an "Imam of the nation" (i.e., probably, the Pêshîmam), and the "Sheykh General", to which no other known title seems to correspond.

44 The title was explained to me as meaning "the *wezîr* of Melek Tawus"; it is also mentioned by al-Damlūjī (1949: 42).

45 By Chîcho and one of the Sheykh el-Wezîr's sons, in September 1992.

46 Kheyrî Beg is the half-brother of the present Prince, Teḥsîn Beg, see Guest 1987: 283.

47 Edmonds 1967: 7; Guest 1987: 134, 137, 176-7, *et passim*. On Hemo Shêro see also al-Damlūjī 1949: 262-3. It is said that Hemo Shêro seized an image of Melek Tawus at this time, and kept it in Sinjar. For a description of his son Khudêda see Edmonds 1967: 62. Hemo Shêro is described as the chief of the Dînadî tribe, most of whom are Feqîrs of lay origin (Edmonds 1967: 7). He himself is referred to, however, as "Sheykh Hemo" (see Guest 1987: 137), and thus presumably belonged to a sheykhly family.

48 Edmonds 1967: 26.

49 So Edmonds 1967: 37. A story to the effect that the present Baba Chawûsh was born a Christian is told by some, but strenuously denied by others.

50 The present Baba Chawûsh is said to have castrated himself in order to be free from temptation. Many Yezidis are proud of this, and the story has become part of Yezidi lore.

51 Edmonds 1967: 37.

52 On this tree see above, Ch. 3, n. 118; Ch. 4, n. 77. It is said that formerly all Sheykhs, Pîrs and Mijêwirs wore the *rist* (PX, verbally, April 1992).

53 See Kreyenbroek, "On the Concept of Spiritual Authority in Zoroastrianism".

54 One chooses one's 'Brother (or Sister) of the Hereafter', on whom see p. 136.

55 According to Edmonds (1967: 33-4), the Shemsani and Adani Sheykhs are affiliated to each other, the Qatanis, including the Prince's family, to the Adanis. Lescot's remark (1938: 88 with n. 2), that all Sheykhs and Pîrs must have an Adani Sheykh is probably less accurate.

56 Relations between individual families of Pîrs and Sheykhs again follow a strict pattern. For a tentative description see Edmonds 1967: 34-5.

57 Lescot 1938: 87.

58 As Siouffi (1885: 88-9) shows, a Sheykh could traditionally demand gifts over and above the usual offering when he needed do so. The *mirîd*, in such cases, would have no option but to satisfy his Sheykh.

59 On the way these accounts relate to objective historical fact see above, Ch. 2. As Drower (1941: 15) points out, a further complication arises from the widespread belief that such holy figures must have been celibate. Some say, therefore, that the "companions of Sheykh Adi" produced sons without needing women, but that their sons married normally.

60 See also above, Ch. 4, Appendix, s.v.v.

61 al-Damlūjī (1949: 43) mentions a Babadîn family, not to be confused with that of Babik, see Edmonds 1967: 32.

62 So Edmonds 1967: 31.

63 So Edmonds 1967: 31. al-Damlūjī (1949: 42) reads "el-Khetmî".

64 So Edmonds 1967: 31. al-Damlūjī (1949: 42) further refers to the families of Sheykh Zendîn (Zeyn el-Dîn), and Sheykh Yetîm.

65 Edmonds 1967: 33.

66 al-Damlūjī (1949: 43): "el-Gîlanî".

67 In his survey of sheykhly families, Edmonds (1967: 31) seems to imply that the main branch of the group are the Sheykhs of "Sheykh Adi", but this is obviously not intended.

68 Edmonds 1967: 30.

69 On the Shemsanis' tendency to be contemptuous of the Pêshîmam see above, p. 128. Because of such loyalties, it is hazardous to claim, as Lescot (1938: 88) does, that one group of Sheykhs has greater power or prestige than the others, since one's findings may only reflect the state of affairs in one given area.

70 I.e., possibly, Adam.

71 I owe this information to Pîr Khidr Silêman. It was confirmed by Chîcho and several other Yezidis in April and October 1992.

72 See Lescot 1938: 88; al-Damlūjī 1949: 38-9; Guest 1987: 33. Cf. above, under "the Pêshîmam". One explanation given is that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was Sheykh Adi's secretary, and that the privilege of writing therefore remained in his family (al-Damlūjī, *loc. cit.*).

73 It is now widely recognised that the Zoroastrians did not write down their holy texts until well into the Sasanian era (226-651), and that writing played a relatively minor role in the transmission of that faith for a long time afterwards (see Kreyenbroek, "On the Concept of Spiritual Authority in Zoroastrianism", forthcoming).

74 It may be significant in this respect that the Adanis often claim descent from "al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī" (see, e.g. Edmonds 1967: 33 and al-Damlūjī 1949: 39), an unequivocally Islamic figure, while the Shemsanis mention Êzdîna Mîr, who was allegedly living at Lalish before the advent of Sheykh Adi (see Edmonds 1967: 4), and could thus be thought in a sense to represent the values of the pre-Islamic faith of the area.

75 Drower 1941: 15.

76 Lescot 1938: 90; Edmonds 1967: 34.

77 E.g. al-Damlūjī 1949: 44; Pîr Khidr Silêman, verbal communication, April 1992.

78 Drower 1941: 15; Pîr Khidr Silêman, verbal communication, April 1992.

79 The 1872 Petition (Art. 4, 6, 8, see above, pp. 6-7) speaks consistently of "the Sheykh or Pîr", and the *Sheykhan Memorial* fails to include the Pîrs in an enumeration of the religious hierarchy

of the sect (see Edmonds 1967: 26, 34).

80 Lescot 1938: 90.

81 See Edmonds 1967: 34, and above, Ch. 4, Appendix, s.v.v.

82 According to Edmonds (1967: 34), this is the senior family of Pîrs. They acts as Pîrs to the other three main branches. Edmonds claims that the function of "Patron Pîr" to the members of this family itself devolves on their "Patron Sheykh".

83 On these families see al-Damlūjī 1949: 45-6.

84 So al-Damlūjī 1949: 46. Edmonds (1967: 34) claims that each of the four main branches of Pîrs is endogamous.

85 See Edmonds 1967: 34-5. Different subdivisions of the Jerwan clan, for example, act as Pîrs to both Shemsani and Qatani Sheykhs.

86 Information from Pîr Khidr Silêman, verbally, April 1992. Edmonds (1967: 6), claims that both families are known as "Tazhî". The name Dimlî probably refers to the region of Daylam on the shores of the Caspian; it is also used to denote an Iranophone people living in Anatolia.

87 Edmonds (1967: 35) calls the Qewwals of Ba'shîqe "Dumilî", stating that they are affiliated to the Sheykhs of Naṣir el-Dîn, and refers to the Beḥzanê group, affiliated to the Adanis, as "Hakkari".

88 Siouffi 1882: 267.

89 Edmonds 1967: 6, 34.

90 So al-Damlūjī 1949: 38, cf. Lescot 1938: 88. In practice the oral teaching of *Qewls* normally devolves on a good 'reciter' (*qewlbêj*). See Silêman and Jindî 1979: 190, q.v. for a brief description of the process of teaching.

91 That many Qewwals were indeed able to read and write is suggested by the list of signatories to a letter to the British Ambassador, written in 1849, and published in Guest 1987: 207-9. A large percentage of these signatories styled themselves "Qewwal".

92 Verbal communication from Pîr Khidr Silêman, March 1992.

93 Lescot 1938: 91.

94 So Pîr Khidr Silêman. As Ba'shîqe and Beḥzanê are situated in territories which, in 1992, were controlled by the Iraqi Government and could not be visited from Lalish, and the Qewwals did not receive permission to attend the Festival of the Assembly in October of that year, I was not able to check this information.

95 At the time of writing, probably the foremost authority on the subject of the *Qewls* is a Feqîr, Feqîr Ḥajjî son of Feqîr Shemo (see Silêman and Jindî 1979: 195). The Sheykh el-Wezîr, who kindly demonstrated the oral teaching process for me at Lalish in October 1992, has handed the tradition on to his son, Feqîr Zerdesht. None of these men belong to the Qewwal class.

96 Edmonds 1967: 7.

97 For a description of this initiation see Siouffi 1885: 91. According to that account, the initiation is performed by the candidate's father or by another Feqîr. It is preceded by a forty-day retreat, during which the scantily clad candidate fasts from morning to evening, and may see no one except his father, or another Feqîr who brings him food. After the retreat, the candidate must give a dinner to the people of his village. He then receives the Feqîr's habit from a member of the Order, who also lectures him on the subject of morals. A 'best man', often an Adani Sheykh, must be present at the initiation ceremony.

98 Edmonds 1967: 36.

99 For a legend concerning the origin of the Order see Edmonds 1967: 35-6.

100 On the evidence of this writer see more fully Fuccaro, forthcoming article.

101 Another name for Feqîrs was *qarabash*, "blackheads".

102 See also Lescot 1938: 95.

103 Siouffi 1885: 92.

104 Lescot (1938: 92), mentions a figure of ninety-two days.

105 Lescot 1938: 92.

106 See Lescot 1938: 92, 94, n. 2. Lescot (1938: 92, n. 3) quotes Febvre's statement that Feqîrs even took care not to kill insects, but adds that he personally has never witnessed such scruples.

107 Lescot 1938: 94.

108 Lescot 1938: 94-5.

109 According to Siouffi (1885: 92), both can only be touched by another Feqîr. Lescot (1938: 92) claims that a Feqîr may not shave, or trim his beard, at all. On taboos concerning facial hair see further below, p. 149 with nn. 34, 35.

110 See Lescot 1938: 94, n. 1.

111 See Siouffi 1885: 92; Lescot 1938: 92-3.

112 See above, Ch. 3, n. 118.

113 So Lescot. The word is presumably a synonym of *rist*, see above, under "the Baba Chawûsh". Pîr Khidr Silêman, however, made no mention of Feqîrs when enumerating those who once wore the *rist*. Moreover, no sashes comparable to that of the Baba Chawûsh appeared to be worn over the tunic even by traditionally dressed Feqîrs in 1992.

114 The sources show discrepancies in their descriptions of the colour of some of these items, which clearly reflect local differences. Siouffi states that the *qemerbest* is black, Lescot that it is red or white. Again, Lescot claims that both trousers and mantle must be white, while Siouffi says that the trousers must be black, while the mantle may be any colour except blue.

115 So Lescot (1938: 93), who draws attention to similar practices among some Sufi Orders. Siouffi (1885: 92) makes similar claims about the *meḥek* only. On the parallel with the Zoroastrian 'sacred girdle' (*kustî*), see above, Ch. 3 with n. 118.

116 So the *Sheykhan Memorial*, see Edmonds 1967: 7, 26.

117 For the Kurdish terms see Silêman and Jindî 1979: 195. The title *serderî*, it seems, can also be used more loosely for leading figures connected with the Sanctuary. In a letter from the 'men of religion' of Lalish to the Armenian community, which I was asked to transcribe in Roman script in October 1992, the title was used for several persons.

118 See the *Sheykhan Memorial*, *loc. cit.*

119 Siouffi 1885: 93. But see Lescot 1938: 96, n. 2.

120 So Siouffi 1885: 95; Drower 1941: 16. Ishak of Bartella (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 261), on the other hand, seems to think of the Kocheks as a caste. He claims that laymen cannot join their ranks, and that circumcision is forbidden for them (Furlani 1937a: 166). al-Damlūjī (1949: 54), on the other hand, confidently states that all Kocheks are laymen.

121 Siouffi 1885: 95.

122 Edmonds 1967: 26.

123 It is interesting to note that, according to Febvre (1683: 349, cited in Fuccaro, forthcoming article), once a man had been initiated as a Feqîr, he was called "kochek". Ishak of Bartella (in Giamil 1900: 44) states that it is the Kocheks who are forbidden to indulge in any form of aggressive behaviour, a claim generally made about the Feqîrs. Lescot (1938: 98) was told that the Kocheks' costume was similar to that of the Feqîrs, an assertion also found in the work of Ishak of Bartella (in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 261). Drower (1941: 16), on the other hand, states that they are dressed in white, which was certainly true of the few Kocheks I met at Lalish in October 1992.

124 See Ishak of Bartella in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 254.

125 See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 266; Furlani 1937b: 78-9.

126 Siouffi 1885: 96.

127 I was told that such activities have stopped now, because the Kocheks "are ashamed" (PX, September 1992).

128 See Empson 1928: 63; Drower 1941: 16; al-Damlūjī 1949: 54. For a story describing a Kochek's ascent to heaven to ask for rain, see Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 270. On the Kocheks' powers of healing see also above, p. 73.

129 See Empson 1928: 63; al-Damlūjī 1949: 55-6.
130 See Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 266.
131 On this feast see below, p. 157f.
132 On one such case, that of Kochek Selman, who claimed to have a mission from Melek Tawus to lead the community, see al-Damlūjī 1949: 57-61.
133 Guest 1987: 35.
134 Lescot 1938: 98.
135 Silêman 1985: 52. This source contains a long description of the functions of the Mijêwir (pp. 51-65).
136 See above, p. 74f.
137 Pîr Khidr Silêman, verbal communication, April 1992. See also Silêman 1985: 51.
138 Edmonds 1967: 45.
139 al-Damlūjī 1949: 46.
140 Lescot 1938: 97.
141 Lescot defines function of the Mijêwir as "supervising the maintenance of the shrines, and, every Tuesday evening, lighting the lamps which must burn near the shrines until Wednesday morning"—a task that could surely be more easily carried out by a person living near the shrine.
142 See Siouffi (1885: 98), who states that there was only one "Ferrash" at Sheykh Adi (i.e., presumably, the Baba Chawûsh), and four or five "chawûsh" (i.e., the Ferrash). The *Sheykhan Memorial* (Edmonds 1967: 26, 37), defines the Baba Chawûsh as "the Ferrash of Sheykh Adi".
143 Edmonds 1967: 37.
144 So Pîr Khidr Silêman. The term is also used in Badinani Kurdish as a polite word for "wife".
145 For an explanation of the term as an Arabic diminutive of *faqīr* see Siouffi 1885: 97.
146 See Siouffi 1885: 97; Lescot 1938: 98; Drower 1941: 16.
147 Chîcho, verbal communication, October 1992.
148 Kurd. *birayê (xushka) akhiretê*. Another term for the 'Brother' is *yar*, see Lescot 1938: 84, n. 1, and below, T. 7. 10.
149 The sources disagree as to the families from which a 'Brother' or 'Sister' may be chosen. Lescot (1938: 84, n. 1): "from a family of Sheykhs other than the one to which one is affiliated". Drower (1941: 20): "either of the sheykhly family to which the young man or woman is hereditarily attached or of another, it does not matter which". Edmonds (1967: 7): "in theory from any Shaykh or Pîr family but generally (and in the case of a member of a shaykhly family always) from that of the novice's Patron Sheykh". Pîr Khidr Silêman (verbally, March 1992): "either from a Sheykh or a Pîr family".
150 The above information is based on Drower 1914: 20.
151 Lescot (1938: 83-4) states that the Hosta is "none other than God", and that the Mirebbî is the equivalent of the 'Brother of the Hereafter', but chosen from a family of Pîrs. The former claim is certainly untrue; the latter can no longer either be proved or disproved.
152 Edmonds (1967: 45) mentions the similar relationships between Christians and Muslims. Both İzoli (1992: 237, s.v. *kirîv*) and Rizgar (1993: 112, s.v. *kirîb)*, imply that the term refers to an institution generally known in Kurdish society.
153 So Silêman 1985: 75. al-Damlūjī (1949: 64): five generations or more.
154 Silêman 1985: 75.
155 See Edmonds 1967: 45; al-Damlūjī 1949: 64.

CHAPTER SIX

SOME BELIEFS, OBSERVANCES AND CUSTOMS

From the days of the early travellers, Yezidis have volunteered information concerning their beliefs with a frankness that did not always characterise their accounts of other subjects.[1] Nevertheless, it is not possible to present the beliefs recorded by researchers over the last century and a half—or those disclosed by modern informants—as a coherent system such as one is accustomed to find in the major religions, dealing in a consistent way with matters concerning God, man, the world and the hereafter. While a certain deterioration in the state of 'priestly' learning, as well as the advance of modernity and the many adversities that have befallen the community may have played a role here, other factors also need to be taken into account. One of these, as was argued above (Ch. 1), is the largely oral character of the transmission of the faith. This has precluded the emergence of an 'official' and exclusive body of teachings. Searching intellectual debates on points of dogma are therefore unlikely to have been a prominent feature of Yezidism even in the remoter past. The nature of the tradition, moreover, has permitted different and indeed mutually exclusive notions to persist side by side.[2] Uncertainties as to the exact observance of festivals and customs, on the other hand, are generally caused by a lack of precise information or by contradictions between eyewitness accounts. In some cases these probably reflect local variations, in others they may be based on misunderstandings between researchers and informants.

BELIEFS

Most sources are agreed in postulating a belief in God, Melek Tawus and the rest of the Heptad, and in Sheykh Adi. Another figure, Êzîd, is also believed to have been a very holy personage; he is sometimes thought to be identical with Melek Tawus (see above, Ch. 4, Appendix). It seems that, under God, the Heptad—and especially its leader, Melek Tawus—is held to direct the affairs of this world. According to one tradition, the Seven gather annually at the shrine of Sheykh Adi during the Festival of the Assembly to decide the course of events for the coming year.[3] Four of the Seven are felt to have a special link with the four 'elements', Fire, Water, Earth and Air.[4]

From the frequent and relatively consistent references in the sacred texts,[5] it can be inferred that accounts of the Cosmogony are felt to represent a significant part of religious knowledge (see Ch. 3). Accounts of the history of the world since Creation, however, are more varied. The *Jilwe* speaks of a series of "wise and discerning regents to whom I [Melek Tawus] have delegated my authority for determinate periods".[6] These "periods" may correspond more or less to those mentioned in T. 1. 39f, which were marked by the appearance of human Prophets such as Noah and Abraham.[7] Another group of accounts, however, claims that the history of the world is divided into long periods of time,[8] each of which is ruled over by a member of the Heptad.[9] Legends about the end of time are even more dissimilar. One of the texts published below (T. 17) simply describes the Resurrection as an event that will take place one day, apparently without special signs or preliminaries. Another, more elaborate account also exists, however.[10] This states that, after the rule of "Osman", whom Sheykh Adi had allowed to occupy the throne at Istanbul as his vassal, the throne will be given to Jesus. The throne will be moved to Egypt and Jesus will rule for forty years as Sultan, while Sheref el-Dîn will be the Mehdî. After forty years, Jesus will relinquish the throne and he and Sheref el-Dîn will go to Mount Qaf, where they will die. God will tell Jibra'îl to open the door of the mountain and make Hajûj come out. Hajûj will reign for seven years, after which Majûj will come to kill him. Majûj will rule for forty years. Then el-Ḥellaj will come and purify the world. The surface of the earth will become completely level, smooth like an egg.[11]

The belief that at the End of Time the earth will be smooth, without either seas or mountains, has a counterpart in the Zoroastrian tradition.[12] The notion of a

struggle (viz. between Hajûj and Majûj) followed by a final act of purification, may also owe something to the eschatological accounts of Zoroastrianism.[13] Such a synthesis between elements of Islamic origin and beliefs which may go back to pre-Islamic Kurdish—though not, in this case, Zoroastrian—traditions, is again to be found in the accounts about the fate of the soul after death. The belief that is most often described, both in the literature and by modern informants, is that in reincarnation.[14] As in Hinduism, this entails the notion of recompense, since the quality of a person's future life depends on his behaviour in the last. A good person can expect to have a better life in his next existence, while an evildoer may be reborn as a pig or a reptile.[15] On the other hand, the notions of a heaven and hell—for which there would appear to be no obvious need in a faith that teaches reincarnation— are also well established in the thoughts of many Yezidis;[16] this is confirmed by the fact that the words occur in at least two standard formulas used by pilgrims at Lalish.[17] Several stories occur which apparently seek to reconcile this contradiction. Lady Drower's informant told her that the "obstinately wicked" were relegated to hell forever,[18] whereas the blessed spent some time in Paradise before entering their next incarnation. Eventually, when they were completely purified, these would become united with God.[19] Most Yezidis' stubborn refusal to be cowed by the fear of hell—an attitude which may be connected with their special feelings concerning the Devil—is reflected by the story that the infernal flames have been extinguished by a child who cried for seven years into a yellow jar. The vessel was then emptied into hell and quenched its fire.[20]

PROHIBITIONS

The frequent references to various taboos in the literature suggests that such prohibitions were considered by Yezidis and researchers alike to be conspicuous markers of Yezidi identity. Many modern Yezidis seem to regard them mainly in this light, rather than as sacred institutions against which it is sinful to offend. One often hears believers state, for example, that they regularly infringe the taboos except in the presence of a representative of religious authority, such as a Sheykh.[21] A prominent figure who had made this admission to me was later reported to have been outraged when, as a guest in a Muslim house, he was offered a salad containing the forbidden lettuce.[22] Clearly, what was at stake was not the fate of his immortal soul but the question of respect for his Yezidi identity.

According to one report, imposing taboos was traditionally the prerogative of individual Sheykhs, who might decide that it was forbidden for their followers to eat certain foods, or indeed to sit on chairs, while such prohibitions were unheard of elsewhere in the community.[23] Trying to remember as many taboos as possible can almost become a game for Yezidis when dealing with researchers, and lively discussions may ensue.[24]

While it would be unwise, in view of the above, to regard all prohibitions associated with Yezidism as reflections of deep-seated religious attitudes or beliefs, a study of the more widely recognised taboos can legitimately be used to further one's understanding of the faith. It is interesting to note, for example, that a significant group of such prohibitions, which appear to be unconnected in the minds of most Yezidis and for whose origins various popular explanations are current, can be better understood in the light of similar prohibitions in Zoroastrianism.[25] As is well known, Zoroastrianism teaches that each of the seven good 'creations' or 'elements' of which the world consists—viz. Fire; Water; Earth; Metal, which represents the sky; Plants; Animals; and Man (see Ch. 3)—is guarded by a member of the Heptad. It is a sin to pollute, abuse or offend these creations. A Zoroastrian, who represents one of the good creations, must avoid contact with various sources of pollution. Unbelievers are notable pollutants, as are corpses and all substances that issue from the body, including hair and fingernails. Women in menses are regarded as highly impure. As was pointed out above, a Yezidi tradition links four holy beings with the 'elements', Water, Fire, Earth and Air, and the original purpose of a number of taboos may well have been to protect these against pollution.[26] Thus, it is forbidden to beat or spit on the earth, or to spit into water or fire, to drink water in such a way that it makes a gurgling noise,[27] or to throw impure matter into the fire. Some also say that it is forbidden to whistle, which could lead to pollution of the air by saliva.[28] The prohibition on cutting down reeds or trees could possibly go back to ancient attitudes towards the plant creation.[29] The act of dressing while sitting down, which is forbidden in Yezidism, may be felt to be in some way polluting or disrespectful to the earth.[30] Various taboos, moreover, regulate direct and indirect contacts between Yezidis and members of other faiths, notably Muslims. Thus Yezidis may not enter mosques,[31] have "relations" with non-Yezidis, or use tumblers, spoons, combs[32] or razors belonging to them. In some cases such objects are licit when they have been purified with water from the

Zemzem spring.[33] The ancient Iranian attitudes with respect to hair seem to have persisted among Yezidis and to find expression in the notion that it is virtuous not to cut or shave one's facial hair. Some sources state that Qewwals, or Feqîrs,[34] never shave their beards, while others claim that it is forbidden for the Prince, Sheykhs, Pîrs, Qewwals, Feqîrs, and Kocheks alike to touch their face with a razor.[35] As in Zoroastrianism, menstruating women are felt to be impure.[36] The traditional prohibition for a Yezidi to use (public) baths and latrines clearly reflects a horror of coming into contact with bodily refuse.[37] The statement of the 1872 Petition,[38] that a man's wife becomes unlawful to him if he remains abroad for at least a year, suggests that prolonged travel results in loss of one's place in society. Both Zoroastrianism and Hinduism have similar rules, which may derive from a sense that travel results in loss of purity.[39]

The lists of forbidden foods includes the following: lettuce; fish; pumpkin; broad beans; cabbage; cauliflower;[40] *bamiyye*;[41] ladies' fingers; the meat of gazelle and cockerel. Dates have been mentioned sporadically, as has pork.[42] The prohibitions best known to my informants in Northern Iraq were those concerning lettuce and fish. No one mentioned pork of their own accord, presumably because the ban on this food was felt to belong to Islam rather than Yezidism. When they were asked about it, however, my informants' reactions suggested that the notion of eating pork seemed far more offensive to them than that of breaking one of the 'Yezidi' food taboos. It would be idle to speculate about the reasons for banning most of the foodstuffs in question. In two cases, however, an obvious explanation has apparently been overlooked. Instead of seeking to explain the ban on lettuce (*khas*) by referring to an otherwise unknown prophetess "Khasse",[43] or to the Arabic verb *khasa'a*, "to chase away, pelt with stones",[44] it seems more plausible to point to the word's homonym meaning "holy man". Likewise, the aversion to cabbage (*lehane*) appears to be due to the similarity, in Kurdish pronunciation, between that term and the Arabic root *la'ana*, "to curse".[45]

Words for "curse" are part of a relatively large group of taboo words. Terms which mean "devil", words which sound like these, terms referring to concepts remotely connected with Satan, such as cursing or stoning,[46] and words sounding more or less alike, are all forbidden.[47] The prohibition of using any term that could be construed as being disparaging to Melek Tawus has always be strongly felt by the community. Layard describes the utter horror of his Yezidi companions when

he unthinkingly referred to a child as "a young Sheyt...".[48] In the 1872 Petition (see Ch. 1), the obligation on a Yezidi to kill any Muslim who utters the phrase "I take refuge in God, etc. [i.e., from the Devil]", was given as one of the reasons why Yezidis could not serve in the army. In my discussions with Yezidi informants, which were generally conducted in Kurdish, the only acceptable way of alluding to Satan proved to be the English "devil"; this term was also used by Yezidis when discussing the subject among themselves. While it is of course possible that this usage originated with my visit, it clearly suggests the lack of an acceptable Kurdish term.

Another taboo that is widely known is the ban on blue clothes.[49] The general impression of Western visitors to the Yezidi areas seems to be that this is seldom observed in practice. However, Kurds and Westerners appear to define colours in different ways.[50] Instances are known of Yezidis refusing a gift of clothes or material which no Westerner would call blue, on the grounds that the colour is forbidden for them.[51] Conversely, it is possible that some of the clothes worn by pious people at Lalish may seem blue to a Westerner, but not to a Yezidi.

Certain taboos and rules also regulate conjugal life. Sexual intercourse, it seems, is forbidden on the eve of Wednesdays and Fridays, the two weekly holy days, and at Sheykh Adi during the Festival of the Assembly. Weddings may not take place on Wednesdays, or in Nîsan (April), the first month of the Yezidi year.[52] A possible reason for the latter prohibition is that many religious observances (notably the New Year and several *ṭiwafs*) take place in Nîsan, which is therefore perhaps regarded as an especially 'religious' month.

FESTIVALS

It is customary to divide the main Yezidi festivals—as opposed to local celebrations such as the *ṭiwaf* and the arrival of the *senjaq* in the villages—into "immobile" and "mobile" ones. The former take place at fixed points in the solar year, whereas the latter follow the Islamic lunar calendar, and are therefore mobile with respect to the solar one.[53] Most of the immobile festivals seem to be essentially seasonal celebrations not unlike those of the ancient Iranian calendar. The mobile feasts are directly linked to major Islamic observances.

It is thought that the ancient Indians and Iranians originally regarded autumn as the beginning of the year. An autumn festival, which in historical times at least was

associated with Mithra, continued to be one of the great observances of Zoroastrianism. At some stage, however, probably under Babylonian influence, the Western Iranians came to celebrate the New Year at the beginning of spring, associating the observance with a traditional spring festival.[54] This may have happened before the advent of Zoroastrianism in Western Iran, but the spring New Year continued to be observed there in Zoroastrian times, and is regarded by most Zoroastrians as the more important of the two feasts.[55] The four main immobile festivals of Yezidism likewise include a spring New Year, and an autumn celebration which has features in common with the Zoroastrian festival. In Yezidism, however, the ancient tradition apparently persisted, and the autumn Festival of the Assembly is undoubtedly more important than the spring New Year. The Yezidi observance of summer and winter celebrations could be said to have a parallel in the ancient Iranian feasts of *Tīragān* and *Sade*.[56] Unlike the Yezidi festivals, however, the ancient feasts have no known connection with fasting, a practice which is forbidden in Zoroastrianism.

The New Year and the month of Nîsan

The Yezidi New Year (*Serêsal*) is celebrated on the first Wednesday of Nîsan (April). While the celebrations are said to be "best" at Ba'shîqe, where a *ṭiwaf* is held immediately afterwards,[57] people generally celebrate the feast in their home villages. At night bonfires are lit, many families kill an animal, the houses are decorated with flowers, and eggs are coloured for the children.[58] In spite of these joyous elements, the festival has a more solemn side. As in Zoroastrianism, a commemoration of the dead is associated with the New Year;[59] women go to the cemeteries to mourn, and some accounts say that Qewwals come there to play non-festive music.[60] Some believe that God and the Heptad determine the events of the year on this day.[61]

As was mentioned earlier Nîsan, the first month of the year, is apparently regarded as a 'religious' month. Many *ṭiwafs* are held in this month,[62] and weddings are forbidden.

The Forty Days of Summer

This feast, known in Kurdish as *Chilleyê Havînan* comprises a number of observances. On the tenth day of Hazîran (June), the Baba Sheykh, the Kocheks

and other 'men of religion' go to Sheykh Adi, where they fast for three days. They then return home to continue their fast. Two or three days before the end of the forty-day period they go back to Sheykh Adi to complete the fast, this time accompanied by other Yezidis. There are general celebrations at Sheykh Adi to mark the end of the fast.[63] According to some sources, this part of the proceedings is known as "the Feast of Sheykh Adi" because Sheykh Adi observed forty-day fasts in both summer and winter.[64]

The Festival of the Assembly

This feast, known in Arabic as *'Ayd al-Jamā'iyya*, and in Kurdish as *Jezhna Jema'iyye*, is the principal and central occasion of the Yezidi religious year. It is held from 23 to 30 September (Seleucid).[65] As the name indicates, this is the time when the whole community gathers at Lalish. Melek Tawus's conclave with the rest of the Heptad at this time[66] is mirrored by the gathering of the terrestrial leaders of the faith, such as a representative of the Prince and the Baba Sheykh, without whose presence the rites are not valid.[67] Traditionally, this was also the time of the return of the *senjaqs*, whose custodians would hand over to the authorities the gifts of the Yezidi communities. The obligation on every Yezidi to attend the Festival if at all possible is one of the main requirements of the faith. In peaceful times, thousands of people from all areas travel to Lalish, where each group or tribe has its own accommodation.

The traditional rites of arrival, such as the crossing of the Silat Bridge and the firing of rifles on the Silavgeh, have been described above (Ch. 4). A holiday atmosphere is one of the main characteristics of the Festival. People wear festive clothes, and at nightfall many lights are lit, including little flames which burn on walls all over the valley.[68] There is a great deal of dancing and singing, and one usually hears popular music being played somewhere in the valley. Solemn, religious sessions of *Qewl*-singing and music (*sema'*),[69] are held on most nights in the forecourt of the Sanctuary. For these sessions a select group of religious dignitaries arrive at the forecourt in a solemn procession,[70] while the rest of the community is gathered on the square outside the gate. The 'men of religion' walk around the forecourt three times, kiss the *Qapiya Sheykh Adî*, and then take their places around a lamp which has one light on top and four smaller ones lower down (*cheqeltû*).[71] These sessions, which usually last several hours, made a deep

impression on Layard, who gives the following description:[72]

> The Sheikhs, in their white turbans and robes, all venerable men with long grey beards, were ranged on one side; on the opposite, seated on the stones, were about thirty Cawals in their motley dresses of black and white—each performing on a tambourine or flute. Around stood the Fakirs in their dark garments, and the women of the orders of the priesthood also arrayed in pure white. No others were admitted within the walls of the court.
>
> The same slow and solemn strain, occasionally varied in the melody, lasted for nearly an hour; a part of it was called "Makam Azerat Esau", or the song of the Lord Jesus. It was sung by the Sheikhs, the Cawals, and the women, and occasionally by those without. I could not catch the words, nor could I prevail upon any of those present to repeat them to me. They were in Arabic; and as few of the Yezidis can speak or pronounce that language, they were not intelligible, even to the experienced ear of Hodja Toma, who accompanied me[73]... The chant gradually gave way to a lively melody, which, increasing in measure, was finally lost in a confusion of sounds. The tambourines were beaten with extraordinary energy; the flutes poured forth a rapid flood of notes; the voices were raised to their highest pitch; the men outside joined in the cry; whilst the women made the rocks resound with the shrill *tahlehl*. The musicians, giving way to the excitement, threw their instruments into the air, and strained their limbs into every contortion, until they fell exhausted to the ground. I have never heard a more frightful yell than that which rose in the valley. It was midnight...

The bull-sacrifice (*qebaġ*) normally takes place on the fifth day of the Festival. It is, in a sense, its culmination, and many laymen leave on the following day. The task of bringing the bull to the centre of Lalish and driving it to the shrine of Sheykh Shems is the privilege of members of three tribes, the Mamûsî, Qa'idî, and Tirk.[74] Members of these tribes must come running down to Lalish from Mt 'Erefat, firing their rifles.[75] It is said that they "drive the bull three times around Mt 'Erefat",[76] then bring it down to the centre, leaving it at the place known as *gaykûzhî* (see Ch. 4) while they go to pay their respects to the Emîr el-Ḥejj and the Baba Sheykh. After this they bring the animal to the square in front of the shrine of Sheykh Adi, where large masses of Yezidis are gathered and Qewwals play music. From there the bull is driven to the shrine of Sheykh Shems, where it is killed. The meat is later distributed to the faithful as *simaṭ*.[77] In the main square a special dance is performed on this occasion.[78]

In October 1992, when the traditional sequence of ceremonies could not always

be observed, another rite took place just before the bull appeared. No description of this ceremony appears to occur in the literature,[79] and I have no information as to whether it is usually performed at this point or on some other occasion.[80] I was alerted to the fact that a ceremony was about to take place by shouts of "*jema'et, jema'et*", which is the term generally used for the Festival as a whole. Feqîr Ḥajjî, probably in his capacity of *Metbekhchî*,[81] donned a white garment called *mersûm*,[82] while a green shawl was held over the heads of two other men.[83] Feqîr Ḥajjî's brother, Feqîr 'Elî, stood near this group, holding a censer containing fire. The Baba Chawûsh also formed part of this central group, which was surrounded by a large and excited crowd. As the group made its way from the central square into the Forecourt and towards the *Qapî*, more men joined those under the green shawl. At the *Qapî*, the main entrance to the sanctuary, only a small number were admitted. *Def* and *shibab* were being played all the time, and this continued inside the Shrine. The group first made its way to the tomb-chamber of Sheykh Adi, which only the chief participants appeared to enter. All then gathered around the niche where a *senjaq* is traditionally kept. Perhaps because, as I later learned, the niche was in fact empty (see Ch. 4), the curtain which hung over it was not removed. The green shawl, which by then covered the heads of a large number of men, was taken down and attached to the niche. In the meantime Feqîr 'Elî was performing an intricate ceremony which involved taking fire out of the censer with a ladle and feeding it with oil from the sacred groves.[84] After this, many participants offered donations, and the procession left the Sanctuary. The general atmosphere was one of exhilaration and excitement.

On the sixth day[85] of the Festival, the people of 'Eyn Sifnî buy and kill a sheep,[86] which they cook whole in a large pot, tearing up the meat with their bare hands when it is done. They offer part of the meat, known as "the *simat* of Chil Mêran",[87] to the Emîr el-Ḥejj and the Baba Sheykh, and eat the rest themselves, chasing away any outsiders with sticks.[88]

On the seventh and last day of the Festival another ceremony takes place, which is called *Berê Shibakê*, i.e., approximately, "Rug of Netting". Edmonds, it seems, did not witness this ceremony, and it was not performed during my visit to Lalish in 1992. The few extant descriptions are relatively vague and at times contradictory. Pîr Khidr Silêman informed me that the ceremony is held in commemoration of the death of Sheykh Adi, who is believed to have died on the sixth day of the Festival.

It consists of creating a 'bier'[89] by tying cords together, presumably over a frame, in such a way that they form an oblong net. This is placed upon two bars, and covered with cloth. It is then taken from Sheykh Adi's tomb-chamber to one of the wells in the Forecourt (the *Kaniya Kêlokê*, see Ch. 4), where it is washed. After this it is returned to the tomb-chamber. Ishak of Bartella's account is very similar, except that the 'bier' is said to be immersed in the Zemzem spring.[90] Several accounts show that, in former times at least, three *senjaqs* were immersed in the same way, one of which was sent off to Beḥzanê immediately afterwards.[91] It seems possible, moreover, that in he past the believers also bathed in the Zemzem well on this day.[92]

Ishak of Bartella[93] states that, some time after the ceremony of *Berê Shibakê*, the Emîr el-Ḥejj and the Baba Sheykh sit down in their appointed places in the Forecourt, and summon the Leader of the Feqîrs (i.e., the *Metbekhchî*, here called "Chawûsh"). The latter puts on a crown and stole,[94] being helped to do so by bystanders. When he is dressed, the people[95] take off their clothes and dance for three hours. Then they stop, and the Head Feqîr removes his crown, which is put away until the next year. Donations are then demanded and given. While there can hardly be any doubt that no such custom is observed or indeed known in modern days, it is no longer possible either to prove or disprove the veracity of Ishak's story as an account of the Yezidi practices of his time.[96] It is interesting to note, however, that al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), in his description of the Zoroastrian autumn festival of *Mehragān*, refers to "the custom of the kings of crowning themselves on this day with a crown on which was worked an image of the sun" and adds that "on this day the Persians hold a fair".[97]

Winter observances

At one time, a forty-day period of fasting similar to that of the *Chilleyê Havînan* may have been observed—or at least recognised—in Yezidism, witness references to a "Beginning of the Forty Days" (*serê chille*) in early winter, to a "Feast of the Forty Days of Winter" celebrated in January at the end of the Winter Fast, to the practice of Sheyk Adi (see under "the Forty Days of Summer"), and to a Kochek who fasted for forty days in summer and winter.[98] Modern Yezidism, however, only seems to know a three-day Fast. This immediately precedes the Festival of *Bêlinde* on the first of December,[99] which commemorates the birth of Êzîd (see also

Ch. 3). According to one source,[100] the Yezidis bake bread in the shape of agricultural implements for *Bêlinde*, distributing them to the poor or feeding them to the oxen they use for agricultural purposes. They light fires in their homes, communal buildings or stables, and gather around them. The custom of baking bread—this time with a raisin or date hidden in it, which brings luck to the person who finds it—is again associated with another winter feast, the "Feast of the Dead", which is said to fall on 10 December. The latter observance is sometimes referred to as "Feast of the Dead of the time of Êzîd". Curiously, this day is also said to be that of Sheykh Adi's manifestation on earth.[101] The impression that there may be a confusion here between festivals of different origin is strengthened by the fact that some Yezidis deny most elements of the above account. Pîr Khidr Silêman called *Bêlinde* "a one-day feast for the dead, when loaves are baked and taken to the graves". He stated, however, that another observance coincides with *Bêlinde*, viz. *Gurka Gay*, "Flame of the Ox", so named because a fire is lit when the oxen come home from the fields at this time.

In view of the Ahl-e Haqq parallel discussed earlier (p. 53), it seems safe to claim that the link between a three-day period of fasting in winter and the appearance of a religious leader, is based on an old tradition. A celebration of the beginning of winter in which fire plays a role could be said to have a counterpart in the Zoroastrian festival of *Sade*.[102] The fact that most sources describe the Feast of the Dead as being largely unrelated to the other observances may well represent the traditional state of affairs. Such similarities between that feast and *Bêlinde* as are mentioned in the literature could be taken to represent an early stage in a process of erosion of the tradition which is more fully reflected by Pîr Khidr's remarks.

Khidr-Ilyas

This feast, which is celebrated by many communities in the Middle East, is said to fall on the first of February.[103] Some people fast for three days.

Saint Sergius

This is an Armenian Christian festival, celebrated in spring, which is shared by the Armenian Yezidis.[104]

The "Road of the Kocheks"

For this occasion, which is not a public festival but rather a period of service, see

above, Ch. 5, under "the Kocheks".

Leylet el-Qedr, Sheva Berat

While this night is often referred to in the literature by the name of the Islamic *Laylat al-Qadr*, it is in fact the Yezidi counterpart of another Muslim observance, the "night of the middle of Sha'bān".[105] On this night, also known as *Laylat al-Barā'a*, God is thought to determine the events of the following year, and many pious Muslims spend the night waking and praying.[106] The Yezidi feast is celebrated on the same date, 15 Sha'bān, and is widely known as *Sheva Berat*.[107]

On *Sheva Berat*, many Yezidis, including secular and religious dignitaries, gather at the Sanctuary of Sheykh Adi. On this one night, led by the Pêshîmam, they perform a modified form of the Muslim *ṣalāt*, which takes all night to complete.[108] Some apparently believe that they fulfil their obligations regarding the *ṣalāt* for the whole year in this way, while others refuse to take part in this "Muslim" practice. It would seem that observance of this night is largely an Adani affair; in Sinjar, pious people spend the night reciting *Qewls* and listening to sacred music in the house of an Adani leader who also bears the title of Pêshîmam.[109] At Lalish, as was mentioned earlier, the Shemsani Sheykhs traditionally come to disrupt the prayer and to steal the prayer-mats, which they hide in the shrine of Sheykh Shems. Although this is now done in jest, there is a local tradition that serious tensions existed in the past between the Shemsanis, who refused to allow any prayer of this type, and the Adanis, who wished to conform to Muslim practice. It is said that the present custom represents a compromise between the parties.[110]

The Feast of Ramadan, or "Sheykh Khal Shemsan"

This feast is celebrated two days before the Muslim festival of *'Ayd al-Fiṭr*, which marks the end of Ramaḍān. The reason for this is said to be that Sheykh Khal Shemsan, a disciple of Sheykh Adi, had been released by Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' after a period of imprisonment, and returned to Lalish two days before the end of the fast. Sheykh Adi was overjoyed at his return, and ordered a feast to be prepared there and then.[111]

The Feast of Sacrifice, the Feast of 'Erefat

The sojourn at 'Arafa—which many pilgrims seek to spend on the "Mountain of

'Arafa"—and the sacrifice, on 9 and 10 Dhū 'l-Ḥijja respectively, are important ceremonies of the Muslim *Ḥajj*.[112] Both have Yezidi counterparts. It is often stated that the Yezidi festival precedes the Islamic *'Ayd al-Aḍḥā* by two days, a statement which presumably refers to the custom of killing an animal at this time. It is not clear how this relates to the time of the Yezidi *Jezhna 'Erefat*, which according to one source falls on 9 Dhū 'l-Ḥijja, i.e., on the same date as the Islamic ceremony.[113] It is said that Sheykhs, Qewwals and Kocheks repair to Sheykh Adi a few days before the actual feast, and spend their time relating what happened to them in earlier incarnations (see also Ch. 5). On the day of the feast, they prepare various foods. Later in the day they climb to the top of Mt 'Erefat,[114] where they stay a short while. Then, near sunset, they run down from the mountain to the Sanctuary, where they wash their hands and faces in the waters of the Zemzem.[115]

Others

The sources mention a few more festivals in which all Yezidis are said to participate. One of these is the *ṭiwaf* of Sheykh Muḥemmed, which takes place in Ba'shîqe immediately after the New Year.[116] This is undoubtedly a local festival, however, albeit a popular one. According to Lescot,[117] observances for the dead, lasting from five to ten days, are held for three years in April, then for three years in summer, then for the same period in early autumn, and again in December. During these days, food is taken to the graves and those who have lost a relative in the past year offer a meal to the poor. While these rites themselves are commonplace, no confirmation could be found for such a curious pattern of dates.

RITES OF PASSAGE

Childbirth, circumcision and baptism

After a birth, the mother must stay in bed for seven days, and should not be left alone for fear of evil spirits.[118] On the seventh day she bathes and, accompanied by her friends, goes to a spring or stream. There she throws into the water seven handfuls of a porridge made with seven kinds of grain. The women then cross the water and eat the rest of the porridge. A similar ceremony takes place when the child cuts its first tooth. This ritual, with its emphasis on the number seven and on water as an element to which offerings are made, probably has ancient Iranian roots.[119] However, the Islamic *'Aqīqa* ceremonial also has echoes in Yezidism.

The Islamic rite, which usually takes place on the seventh day after a birth, involves the killing of an animal, the shaving of the baby's head and, usually, the naming of the child.[120] Traditionally, Yezidi fathers kill an animal when they name a child. The baby's hair, on the other hand, may not be cut until the fortieth day, when the family's Sheykh cuts off two locks, one for himself and one for the Pîr.

Although some exceptions are mentioned in the literature,[121] male circumcision is the general rule among Yezidis. The operation is often performed relatively soon after the birth.[122] As we saw earlier (Ch. 5), it takes place on the knees of the *kerîf*, and is followed by a traditional 'pacification' of the child's mother by the *kerîf*.[123]

Beyond the fact that baptism (*mor kirin*) is practised in Yezidism, little precise information appears to be available, probably because the details of individual ceremonies vary. The rite should ideally take place at the the *Kaniya Sipî*,[124] at a relatively early age. According to one source, the Sheykh takes the child into the chamber of the well, immerses it three times, and then places his left hand on the child's head and says, "Hol, hola, Sultan Êzîd. You have become the lamb of Êzîd, the leader of the Yezidi faith" (*Hol, hola, Êzîdê Siltan. Tu bûyî berxê Êzîd, serekê riya Êzîd*).[125] Children who cannot come to Lalish may be baptised with water from the *Kaniya Sipî* which the Qewwals bring with them when touring the country with the *senjaq*.[126] Traditionally, new clothes were also immersed in the *Kaniya Sipî*, and such objects like razors or knives could be purified in this way.[127]

Weddings

Although variants obviously exist, the following features seem to be characteristic of a traditional Yezidi wedding.[128] When the parents of the couple have agreed a brideprice, an agreement should be written down by a Sheykh, who also blesses the couple. Ideally, an Adani Sheykh should preside over the proceedings.[129] At this time, the Sheykh gives the bride some *berat*, while she offers gifts to him and to the Pîr. The preparation of the bride for the wedding begins two days in advance. She takes a hot bath, and she and her friends paint their hands with henna. If the bridegroom lives in another village, the boys and girls of his village come to that of the bride, where they spend the night. The following morning the bride, who remains silent throughout the proceedings, is dressed, and made to wear a red veil. The privilege of fastening the large buckle on her belt belongs to her 'Sister of the

Hereafter'. After saying farewell to her mother, the bride is set on a horse and is taken to the groom's village. During this procession the young people of the groom's village have mock fights with those of the bride's, who refuse to let her go without payment. At the groom's house, the 'Sister of the Hereafter' helps the bride to dismount. She is welcomed by her future mother-in-law, who hands her a jar of sweetmeats which she must smash against the threshold of her new home. A sheep is killed by the door as she enters the house. Inside, she is taken to the bridal chamber, where she must stay for seven days. The chamber is symbolically 'veiled' by a Sheykh and Pîr,who tie a curtain across the room.[130] On the day of the bride's arrival the groom must stay with his 'Brother of the Hereafter'.[131] The 'Brother' accompanies him to his own house late at night, when he goes to consummate the marriage. The 'Brother'and two of the groom's friends guard the door of the chamber, and are later invited to share some food with bride and groom. At the end of her seven-day period of seclusion, the bride may leave the room. As happens after childbirth (q.v.), a porridge is prepared of seven kinds of grain, seven handfuls of which are thrown into a stream, while the rest is eaten by the bride and her friends after they have crossed the water.[132] Dances are held in the groom's village during the seven days of the bride's seclusion.

Funerary customs

As in the case of weddings customs related to death and burial vary locally, but the following features appear to be characteristic. If at all possible the body of the deceased should be washed by his or her own Sheykh or Pîr, in the presence of the 'Brother (or Sister) of the Hereafter'. After washing, the body is laid on a white sheet and balls of dust from Sheykh Adi (*berat*) are placed in the mouth and on the body. The sheet is then sewn up. The digging of the grave generally devolves on the Mijêwir, who lives locally and is in charge of the cemetery; men of the village usually help. When the body is laid in the grave, it seems, the 'Brother' or 'Sister' must open the shroud so as to expose the face.[133] A special hole is made for the head—perhaps in order to enable the two Angels (cf. T. 19. 55f) to identify the deceased—while the rest of the body is covered with large boulders so as "to prevent the earth, as far as possible, from touching the corpse".[134] The grave must then be completely filled in, or sealed off (T. 19. 51), so that no contact exists between the corpse and the air. Especially in the case of a dramatic death, the

women of the household cut off their plaits, which are hung over the grave. Traditionally, a stick and some food was left on the grave, and a 'man of religion' apparently addressed the dead person, advising him to offer the food to the Angels, and to use the stick if they proved troublesome. Gold coins were sometimes buried with the body, to offer to the Angels.[135] Appropriate *Qewls* are recited at funerals, and usually again by the Mijêwir a week after the death.[136] The initial period of mourning lasts three days. During the first year, relations go to the grave on Wednesdays and Fridays, and the poor must be fed in the dead person's name at regular intervals during this time.[137] Formerly, as we saw earlier (Ch. 5), Kocheks were often asked for information concerning the deceased's next birth. If the prediction was bad, the relatives could seek to improve matters by donations to a shrine.[138] The clothes of a dead man go to his 'Brother of the Hereafter', or to his Sheykh or Pîr, while the Sheykh is said to be entitled to his usual fees for another year.[139]

OTHER PRACTICES

Oaths

One source states that oaths are administered by drawing a circle on the ground. The inside of the circle is declared to be "the property of Melek Tawus", an observance which has a parallel in Zoroastrianism.[140] Oaths are also sworn by "the Sanctuary of Sheykh Shems" or "by God, by Sheykh Adi, by the Sanctuary of Sheykh Shems".[141] An oath is particularly effective or convincing, it seems, if the holy being invoked is felt to be especially powerful.[142]

Fire

While a number of taboos exist concerning fire (see above), the Yezidis' respect for this 'element' is also expressed in more positive ways. Thus it is customary, especially at Lalish, for believers to pass their right hands through a flame in a censer held by a 'man of religion', after which the hand is rubbed over the forehead and brought to the lips.[143]

Notes

[1] Layard's account of Yezidi beliefs (Layard 1849: 297-9) seems to reflect an honest attempt on the part of the religious authorities to enlighten him. It is likely, however, that he was deliberately misled in the matter of the language and intelligibility of the *Qewls* (see Foreword, and p. 153), and in that of the character of the *Kaniya Sipî* (see above, Ch. 4, with n. 89).
[2] On a similar phenomenon in the older Zoroastrian tradition see Kreyenbroek, "On the Concept of Spiritual Authority in Zoroastrianism".
[3] Edmonds 1967: 4. Ishak of Bartella (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 259), claims that God, having summoned to his presence "all the chiefs, nobles and casters of spells (*incantateurs*)", ordains the affairs of the year at the New Year (so also PX). According to Isma'îl Beg (see Lescot 1938: 72, n.10), this takes place during *Leylet el-Qedr* (on which see p. 157).
[4] See above, pp. 53, 59, 100, and below, T. 5. 25, 26, 27. For the Zoroastrian and Ahl-e Haqq parallels see also Kreyenbroek 1992: 69-70.
[5] See esp. the *Meshef Resh* and T. 1, 2, below.
[6] See Guest 1987: 200.
[7] The origin of the strange list of "Yezidi kings" mentioned in the *Meshef Resh* is obscure, and the list is not taken into account here.
[8] Empson (1928: 89), and Ishak of Bartella (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 255): "a thousand years". I. Joseph (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 272): "ten thousand" years.
[9] Empson and Joseph (see preceding note) state that the lord of our time is Melek Tawus. According to Ishak it is Êzîd.
[10] Recorded by Lescot (1938: 65-6).
[11] For the latter feature see also Dirr 1917-18: 567.
[12] See Anklesaria 1956: 293 (GBd. 34. 33).
[13] On Zoroastrian accounts of the final struggle between forces representing Good and Evil, which is followed by a final *yasna* ritual, see Kreyenbroek 1985: 138-41.
[14] Empson (1928: 78) recorded the story that the soul of el-Ḥellaj entered a water-jar which his sister was filling, after which she drank from it and became pregnant. Besides the theme of the transmigration of souls, the story may also reflect earlier attitudes concerning next-of-kin marriages, cf. below. T. 14. 7, 8.
[15] See Drower 1941: 32-3, 91; Lescot 1938: 67-8. On the traditional practice of hiring a Kochek to divine the fate of a recently departed soul see above, p. 134.
[16] See Lescot 1938: 68. Dirr (1917-18: 570) states that the souls of the blessed go to heaven, while some say that the damned go directly to hell, others that they continue to roam the earth, constantly harrassed by jinns.
[17] See above, pp. 78, 82.
[18] Drower 1941: 91. Empson (1928: 81, 86), on the other hand, also heard that Paradise was the ultimate destination of the souls of the good, but was told that, "some time or other all Yezidis have sinned, and before entering heaven an expiatory period must be passed in another place, but no one will be punished eternally."
[19] Drower 1941: 91.
[20] See Ishak of Bartella in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 255, and, with variants, Empson 1928: 80-1.
[21] Note however, that such infringements could traditionally lead to excommunication (Furlani 1937a: 153).
[22] Information I owe to Ms Maria T. O'Shea.
[23] See I. Joseph in Furlani 1937a: 164.
[24] See, e.g., Drower 1941: 45.
[25] This does not necessarily indicate that the taboos are of Zoroastrian origin. Another ancient cult of Iranian provenance, for example, may have observed very similar laws of purity.
[26] For a survey of most of these prohibitions see Dirr 1917-18: 567; Lescot 1938: 77. As stated earlier (Ch.3, n. 57), during my visits in 1992, Pîr Khidr Silêman repeatedly insisted that respect

for these 'elements' was an essential part of Yezidi teaching.

[27] This taboo is explained by the story that, after the execution of el-Ḥellaj, his head was thrown into water, which made such a noise (Empson 1928: 79; Furlani 1937a: 174). The original reason may have been that this way of drinking was felt to mix water, air and saliva in an improper manner.

[28] The taboo on whistling was mentioned to me by a non-Yezidi informant in Northern Iraq, a teacher whose Yezidi pupils had vehemently objected to his whistling in class (verbal communication, September 1992). Some of my Yezidi informants denied that such a taboo existed, while others called it old-fashioned.

[29] On this taboo see Furlani 1937a: 172-3; Lescot 1938: 77. Note, however, Furlani's statement that only the trees in sacred groves are so protected.

[30] See Furlani 1937a: 174. The prohibition is mentioned in the *Meshef Resh* (Guest 1987: 203), as is the rule against urinating while standing, which Yezidism has in common with both Islam and Zoroastrianism. For measures seeking to prevent contact between a corpse and the earth see p. 160 with n. 134.

[31] According to some accounts, they may freely visit churches (Furlani 1837a: 172).

[32] For a popular explanation of this taboo, viz. one based on the claim that the Ar. word for "comb", *mushṭ*, is a 'taboo word' like *sheyṭān*, *shaṭṭ*, etc., see Furlani 1937a: 171-2. Drower (1941: 75) points out, however, that her informants appeared to feel no inhibitions about pronouncing this word.

[33] See Furlani 1937a, *passim*. It seems possible that the *Kaniya Sipî* is meant, see p. 159.

[34] So Lescot 1938: 92. Siouffi (1885: 92) states that a Feqîr may only be shaved by another Feqîr. See also above, p. 134.

[35] See Furlani 1937a: 162-3.

[36] See Drower 1941: 23.

[37] See Furlani 1937a: 170. It is probable that this measure, instituted to ensure cleanliness, has contributed to the Yezidis' unmerited reputation for a lack of that quality among neighbouring groups.

[38] See above, p. 7; Furlani 1937a: 171.

[39] In Zoroastrianism long journeys are held to vitiate a priest's purity (Modi 1922: 149). That prolonged travel has similar consequences in Hinduism was confirmed by my colleague, Dr I. Julia Leslie.

[40] See Lescot 1938: 77 with n. 1. Drower's informant, on the other hand, stated that this is the only type of cabbage that may be eaten (Drower 1941: 45).

[41] *Hibiscus esculentus*.

[42] For details, and for popular explanations of some taboos, see the elaborate account by Furlani (1937a: 163-6).

[43] So the *Meshef Resh*, see Guest 1987: 203. On "Khasse" see above, p. 123.

[44] So I. Joseph in Furlani 1937a: 165.

[45] It is perhaps fair to mention here that Pîr Khidr Silêman strongly disagreed with these explanations, preferring the traditional account which states that, when Badr al-Dîn Lu'lu' had taken Sheykh Hesen prisoner he paraded him around the streets of Mosul, where sellers of lettuce and cabbage threw their wares at him (PX, verbal communication, October 1992).

[46] The epithet *al-rajīm* "the stoned, accursed one" is generally used by Muslims for the Devil. It seems that the alleged ban on dates springs from the association between stoning the devil and throwing away the stones of the fruit (Furlani 1937a: 165).

[47] For examples see Giamil 1900: 71; Furlani 1937a: 155.

[48] I.e., "Sheyṭan", a common way of describing naughty children in several Middle Eastern languages. See Layard 1849: 287. Instances have been reported of similar offences provoking much the same reaction.

[49] On the similarities between Yezidism and Mandaeism in this respect see above, p. 5. For a traditional account of the origin of the prohibition see above, p. 135.

[50] The word *shîn*, for example is used for "blue", but also for shades of green occurring in nature

(Rizgar 1993: 178). In spring, therefore, plants "become blue".
[51] Such an incident happened to Ms F. Christine Allison and Ms Maria T. O'Shea in April 1992.
[52] See Furlani 1937a: 169-70. The prohibition on conjugal relations at Lalish during the Festival of the Assembly was mentioned to me several times by informants.
[53] In calculating the dates of their festivals Yezidis generally use the Seleucid or 'Eastern' calendar, which in this century is thirteen days behind the Gregorian or 'Western' one (see Guest 1987: 36-7). The dates given in the following pages are those of the Seleucid calendar.
[54] See Boyce 1982: 34. Boyce suggests that the autumn festival came to be dedicated to Mithra at the time when the spring New Year was adopted. Since Mithra's connection with the beginning of time is probably of Indo-Iranian origin, links between the festival and the divinity may well be older (see Kreyenbroek 1992, 1993).
[55] al-Bīrūnī (1879: 207-9), an Arab scholar of the eleventh century, states, however, that some Zoroastrians continued to regard the autumn festival as the more significant occasion.
[56] See Boyce 1982: 24, 35.
[57] See Drower 1941: 14; Silêman 1985: 15, and above, p. 158.
[58] Verbal communication from Pîr Khidr Silêman. See also Lescot 1938: 71-2.
[59] In Zoroastrianism, the souls of the dead are believed to return to earth on the night before New Year's day, and to depart again before sunrise. See Boyce 1989: 212f.
[60] So both Ishak (in Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 259), and Empson 1928: 54. It seems doubtful, however, that there were ever enough Qewwals to officiate at all cemeteries.
[61] See above, n. 3.
[62] See Silêman 1985: 15-16.
[63] Empson's statement (Empson 1928: 53), that a white ox is sacrificed to the Sun on this occasion is, however, based on a misunderstanding.
[64] Furlani 1937b: 58-9; Guest 1987: 36-7. Pîr Khidr Silêman informs me that another name is "the Feast of Lalish" (*Jezhna Lalishê*). In everyday usage the festivities are often called *Chilleyê Havînan*.
[65] See Furlani 1937b: 73; Guest 1987: 37. The dates of the Festival in 1992 corresponded to the dates given by Guest.
[66] See Edmonds 1967: 4. In his description of the Zoroastrian autumn festival, al-Bīrūnī (1879: 207-9) states that the Zoroastrians of his day believed that the Angels came down to earth at this time.
[67] See above, Ch. 5, n. 24.
[68] At other times such flames are only lit on the eves of Wednesdays and Fridays, see above, p. 81.
[69] Both the term and the practice are clearly of Sufi origin, see Schimmel 1975: 178-86.
[70] According to al-Damlūjī (1949: 195), the order of the procession is as follows: first comes the head of the Feqîrs (Metbekhchî), in his official dress, which consists of the "crown" of Sheykh Adi and the *khirqe* of Sheykh Obekr. He is followed by the Pêshîmam , walking on the right, and the Emîr el-Ḥejj, on the left. Then come the Baba Sheykh and his "deputy", followed by the leader of the Kocheks, who walks alone. When twenty men have assembled, they walk around the lamp three times. In October 1992, Pîr Khidr Silêman and Sheykh Eydo Baba Sheykh, after some discussion, gave the following description: "The procession is led by a Feqîr. Then come the Pêshîmams of the Baba Sheykh and the Emîr el-Ḥejj. They are followed by the Baba Sheykh and the Emîr el-Ḥejj themselves. The Baba Sheykh is followed by four Shemsani Sheykhs, the Emîr el-Ḥejj by four Adanis [sic], so that six men walk on each side. After the members of the procession have kissed the *Qapî*, the others kiss it; first the Shemsani Sheykhs, then the Qatanis, the Adanis, and the Qewwals." See also above, p. 128.
[71] For the symbolism cf. T. 4. 14, 15, 16.
[72] Layard 1849: 292-3.
[73] For an explanation of this fallacy as the result of deliberate deception see above, n. 1, and Foreword, p. ix.
[74] See Edmonds (1967: 16), who points out that most members of these tribes are affiliated to the

Qatani Sheykhs (who are said to be descended from Sheykh Obekr), while the ceremony itself is so closely associated with Sheykh Shems. He further remarks that the meat of the bull is later distributed at the "hostel of Obakr". Pîr Khidr Silêman, on the other hand, informed me that this takes place at the shrine of Sheykh Shems itself.

75 From Edmonds' description (Edmonds 1967: 16), it would seem that several groups of young men are running around the area, only one of which is actually driving the bull. Guest (1987: 37) speaks of "pretending to steal a bull". The notion of stealing a bull is also found in connection with the cult of Mithra(s), see, with references, Russell 1987: 267.

76 Verbal communication by Pîr Khidr Silêman. This part of the ceremony was not performed in 1992, since few members of the tribes in question could attend.

77 I.e., "sacred or ritual food", see above, p. 77 with n. 69.

78 The name of the dance is *govenda heft rêzî*, "dance of seven rows" (PX).

79 Except perhaps, in the vaguest possible terms, in Furlani 1937b: 70. Furlani seems to imply that all pilgrims visit the tomb-chamber at the end of their visit, and receive *berat* on this occasion.

80 I had no special informants with me at the time. The following account relies on my own spoken description of the ceremony, recorded while it was taking place. A copy of the tape is kept by the Society for Iranian Oral Studies (SIOS), London.

81 This is suggested by the role Feqîr Ḥajjî played in this ceremony, although I never heard him referred to by this title. Several members of Feqîr Ḥajjî's family, including his father, Feqîr Shemo, have held this office (see Silêman and Jindî 1979: 195).

82 I believe that this garment was rather like a long, short-sleeved vest, but my recollection is not definite. There is no doubt, however, of the colour, which is repeatedly mentioned in my recorded description. Isma'îl Beg (Furlani 1937b: 71-2) states that, in the days of the Festival, the Metbekhchî wears the "crown and the mantle of Sheykh Adi" during prayers. Ishak (Furlani 1937b: 66) speaks of a "crown" and an "episcopal stole, made of goats' hair and dyed with *zirgûz*". This implies that the garment was black, which seems to be confirmed by Isma'îl in another passage (Furlani 1937b: 72). As was mentioned earlier (n. 70), al-Damlūjī (1949: 195) refers to the "crown of Sheykh Adi and the *khirqe* of Sheykh Obekr", worn by the *Metbekhchî*. This again suggests a black garment.

83 People in the crowd offered different explanations of the significance of the green shawl. One man said that it symbolised "all the babies born in this year", which may refer to the notion of fertility or divine blessing. This is also suggested by the colour green, which is held to be auspicious by several Middle Eastern communities, including the Iranian Zoroastrians (see Boyce 1989: 36).

84 I am unable to recollect the exact procedure.

85 So Pîr Khidr Silêman, whose account is confirmed by Edmonds (1967: 20). al-Damlūjī (1949: 194): "the fourth day". On the same day Edmonds (1967: 18) witnessed a ceremony in which the twin orbs (*hilêl*), probably newly gilded, were re-installed on the spire of Sheykh Shems. Although such functions are held from time to time, they do not form part of the Festival proper (PX).

86 Isma'îl Beg (Furlani 1937b: 71): "a large bull".

87 On Chil Mêran see above, p. 100f.

88 So Edmonds (1967: 20-1), who also remarks that this *simaṭ* consists of meat only, while in other cases wheat is added.

89 Isma'îl Beg used the Ar. word *takht* for this structure, presumably in its sense of "bed, couch". Furlani (1937b: 71, 73), however, wrongly took it to mean "throne".

90 In Furlani 1937b: 66. Isma'îl (Furlani 1937b: 71) states that it is immersed in the *Kaniya Sipî*, but mentions the Zemzem in connection with the immersion of the *senjaqs*. While it is possible that the practice of immersion in the *Kaniya Kêlokê* is recent, the reference to the Zemzem well is strange. That well is adjacent to the tomb-chamber, and it would seem to be unnecessary to take the 'bier' out of the sanctuary in order to immerse it. Moreover the passages from the main Hall into the Cave, and from the Cave to the Cavern where the Zemzem is located, are so narrow that

awkward manoeuvering would have been needed to take the 'bier' into it. It is, of course, possible that the 'bier' was taken into the Cavern by the back door.

[91] See the accounts of Ishak and Isma'îl in Furlani 1937b: 66, 72.

[92] Isma'îl (Furlani 1937b: 72), who implies that the distribution of the *simaṭ* of Chil Mêran and the *Berê Shibakê* take place on the same day and are more or less interwoven, says that this takes place after the *simaṭ* has been eaten.

[93] In Furlani 1937b: 66-7.

[94] See above, nn. 70, 82.

[95] The text could be taken to refer only to the inhabitants of Ba'shîqe and Beḥzanê, but this seems unlikely.

[96] The existence of some such festivity—which may have resembled a carnival rather than an orgy—would explain the strange conversation reported by Badger (1852: I. 109), in which servants of the Sanctuary apparently admitted that Yezidis committed "adultery" (i.e., presumably, behaviour which is unseemly in the eyes of outsiders, and would be improper for Yezidis on any other occasion) in the precincts of the Shrine.

[97] al-Bīrūnī 1879: 207-9.

[98] The words "sar-e çla" (i.e. *serê chille*) are mentioned in Dirr 1917-18: 574. For the January observance see Furlani 1937b: 76, 77. Note, however, that the date of 20 January given there for the end of the fast can hardly be correct. The Kochek is mentioned by Ishak of Bartella (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 253-4).

[99] So all except al-Damlūjī (1949: 191) and Lescot (1938: 71), who state that the Fast begins on this date, being followed by the Feast. Lescot calls the fasting period *Ida Roja*, i.e., "Feast of the Fast(s)", which he mistranslates as "Feast of the Sun".

[100] al-Damlūjī 1949: 191.

[101] See Furlani 1937b: 76-7; al-Damlūjī 1949: 191-2.

[102] See Boyce 1989: 176.

[103] So all except Lescot (1938: 71), who gives "18 February". For references see Furlani 1937b: 77-8.

[104] See Guest 1987: 38. The festival is also included in a list of feasts compiled by Isma'îl Beg, and published in German by Dirr (1917-18: 573-4). Many of the data found in that list are so improbable, however, that the document as a whole should be approached with caution.

[105] See, with references, Furlani 1937b: 60-2.

[106] See Juynboll 1930: 118 with n. 1.

[107] I.e., "night of *Barā'a*". For the date see al-Damlūjī 1949: 196. The information concerning the alternative name I owe to Pîr Khidr Silêman. al-Damlūjī (*loc. cit.*) refers to the feast by yet another name, *'Ayd al-Muḥayyā*. One source, viz. the list mentioned above in n. 104 (see Furlani 1937b: 60-1), describes the Yezidi observance as an 'immobile' one, but its evidence is obviously incorrect.

[108] So al-Damlūjī 1949: 196, q.v. for an elaborate description of the Yezidi *ṣalāt*.

[109] al-Damlūjī 1949: 197-8. See also above, p. 127f.

[110] See also above, p. 131. I am indebted for this information to Pîr Khidr Silêman.

[111] See Furlani 1937b: 79-80; Lescot 1938: 72. On Sheykh Khal Shemsan see above, p. 108. On Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' see above, p. 31.

[112] See Juynboll 1930: 142-4.

[113] For a survey of the references see Furlani 1937b: 80-3. For the latter date see al-Damlūjī 1949: 192.

[114] According to al-Damlūjī (1949: 192), the procession is led by the Pêshîmam and other 'men of religion'.

[115] So Ishak (Nau and Tfinkdji 1915-17: 266; Furlani 1937b: 81) and al-Damlūjī 1949: 192. al-Damlūjī adds that they kiss a "Black Stone" on their way down, but see above, Ch. 4, n. 85.

[116] So Silêman 1985: 15. The festival is included in Furlani 1937: 84.

[117] Lescot 1938: 72.

[118] See Drower 1941: 32-3, on which the following account is based.
[119] For the *āb-zohr*, a Zoroastrian ritual of making offerings to the water which is part of the marriage rites, see Boyce 1989: 174, 190-1. Mrs Shehnaz Munshi of Bombay informs me that the Parsis of Gujarat observe a similar custom in connection with weddings (see p. 160): some time after a wedding the bride, usually accompanied by six friends, offers seven gifts to the Waters (verbal communication December 1993).
[120] Juynboll 1930: 150.
[121] Badger (1852: I. 129) states that the Khalitiyye tribe does not practise circumcision, a statement repeated by Empson (1928: 55). On a similar claim made by Ishak of Bartella regarding the Kocheks (Furlani 1937a: 166), see Ch. 5, n. 120.
[122] Anastase (1899: 311), followed by Empson (1928: 54) say: "about twenty days after baptism". Anastase states that the boy is made to say, "I am the lamb of the Red Êzîd" (*ez berxê Êzîdê sorim*). This suggests that the operation was once regularly performed on older children.
[123] Information I owe to Pîr Khidr Silêman, who showed me a video-recording of a circumcision in April 1992.
[124] Anastase (1899: 310), again followed by Empson (1928: 49), states that children are baptised in the Zemzem well. This was not only contradicted by my informants and by my own observation, but also by the line "the *Kaniya Sipî* is (the place of) my baptism", in T. 8. 5.
[125] See Anastase 1899: 310, where the text is mistranslated as "Hol hola, Yazīd is Sultan, you have become a lamb of Yazīd, perhaps you will be a martyr for the faith of Yazīd." The mistake was spotted by Makas (1900: 49). Following Anastase, however, Empson (1928: 49) states that the priest hopes that the child will become a martyr.
[126] So Empson 1928: 50.
[127] Empson 1928: 50. Cf. above, p. 7.
[128] The following account is based on a description by Princess Wansa, published in Drower 1941: 18-23. See also Ishak's account in Giamil 1900: 45-9.
[129] Since the Adanis traditionally have a monopoly on literacy, their presence would have been necessary if a written document was drawn up. In practice, it seems unlikely that many Adanis could read and write, nor were they always invited to officiate at weddings (see Lescot 1938: 88 with n. 3).
[130] So Drower. The reference is probably to the Sheykh and Pîr of the groom's family, but this is not stated.
[131] If the bride arrives on a Tuesday, the groom stays with his 'Brother' another day, since the marriage may not be consummated on Tuesday night (Drower 1941: 22, see also above). In some places, the same may be true if she arrives on a Thursday.
[132] See also above, n.119. The act of crossing the stream is probably felt to be a symbol of transition, witness the rites of the Bridge of Silat (see above, p. 78).
[133] Most of the information presented here is based on verbal communications from Pîr Khidr Silêman, with some reference to Empson 1928: 62, and to T. 19, below. The exact procedure regarding the uncovering of the head, however, cannot be deduced from these sources. Pîr Khidr told me that the body was wrapped in a shroud, which was opened by the 'Brother' or 'Sister' at the grave. Empson states that the shroud is lifted from the face. T. 19. 41 mentions a separate "eye-cover" (*qerqere*).
[134] So Empson 1928: 63, cf. T. 19. 50f. It may be relevant to note that, while the Zoroastrian laws of purity clearly aim at preventing defilement of the earth by a dead body, hard rock was apparently felt to be impermeable to pollution (see Boyce 1982: 56).
[135] So Empson 1928: 63.
[136] So Pîr Khidr Silêman.
[137] Dirr 1917-18: 571; Empson 1928: 64.
[138] Empson 1928: 64.
[139] For the latter statement see Empson 1928: 64. The rest of this information I owe to Pîr Khidr Silêman.
[140] For the Yezidi custom see Empson 1928: 52. In Zoroastrianism, a furrow is drawn and the

person about to take the oath stands inside it (Dhabhar 1932: 47, 49).
[141] Verbal communication from Pîr Khidr Silêman, April 1992.
[142] See above, pp. 95, 98, 109.
[143] Empson 1928: 53. On the special holiness of fire see also Dirr 1917-18: 567.

PART TWO

THE TEXTS

1: Qewlê Zebûnî Meksûr[1]

(1) zebûnekî minî dil-meksûre
heke ji ba 'ezîz Melek[2] Fexredîn bêtin destûre
em dê medḥa deyn ji beḥrêd kûre

(2) zebûnekî minî kêm-taqete
heke ji ba 'ezîz Melek[3] Fexredîn bêtin îcazete
em dê ji beḥrêd kûr deyn oṣfete

(3) li min cema dibûn babzere
dê ji wê beḥrê deyn xebere
tê heyne durrêd cewahere

(4) li min cema dibûn zerbabe
dê ji wê beḥrê deyn tebabe
beḥre û doje û qîr dinave

(5) medha biden ji kitîr
textê tenê dibû[4] emîr
huwa 'l-'ālim wa huwa 'l-baṣīr

(6) pedşê min ji durrê bû
ḥisnatek jê diçêtbû
şaxa meḥbetê lê bû

(7) lê bû şaxa muḥbetê
li destê Sultan Êzî heye qelema qudretê
el-ḥemdu'llah û şikr ez havêtime ser pişka sunetê

(8) aşiqa ew mîr dît û kin nase
jêk vavartin muḥebete û kase
kire riknê çendî esase

(9) kire rikn û riknî
durr ji heybetê hincinî
taqet nema hilgerî

(10) taqet nema li ber biṣebrî
durr bi renga xemilî
ṣor bû spî bû ṣefirî

1: The Hymn of the Weak Broken One

(1) Oh lowly one of mine, of broken heart,
If permission comes[1] from dear Melek[2] Fekhr el-Dîn,
We shall praise the deep oceans.[3]

(2) Oh lowly one of mine, of little endurance,
If authorisation comes from dear Melek Fekhr el-Dîn,
We shall give descriptions of the deep oceans.

(3) Respectable[4] people are gathered around me;
We shall tell (them) about that ocean,
In it there are pearls, jewels.[5]

(4) Respectable people are gathered around me;
We shall give a full account[6] of that ocean,
It is an ocean, and hell and pitch are (contained) in it.

(5) Give praise to the (One who is) Many.[7]
(First there was) only the Throne; (then) the Prince came into being.[8]
He is the knowing one and he is the all-seeing one.

(6) My King came from the Pearl,
Some good things developed from it,
The branch of love[9] was in it.[10]

(7) In it was the branch of love.
Sultan Êzîd holds the Pen of Power in his hand.[11]
Praise be to God, and thanks, that I have cast my lot with the Tradition.[12]

(8) The Lovers saw that Prince and came to know him,
Love and the Cup became separate,[13]
He laid[14] a number of cornerstones.[15]

(9) He made cornerstones, and supported (the earth),
The Pearl burst open[16] in its awe,
It could not prevent itself, and moved upward (?).[17]

(10) It did not have the strength to remain patient,
The Pearl became adorned with colours,
It became red and white and yellow.[18]

(11) durr bi[5] renga geş bû
berî ne 'erd hebû
ne 'ezman hebû ne 'erş bû
ka bêje min pedşê min bi kê ra xoş bû

(12) pedşê min xoş-ṣuḥbete
lêk rûniştibûn muḥbete
pedşê min li wê derecê kir ḥedd-û-sete

(13) pedşê min ḥedd-û-sedd li wê çêkirin
şerî'et û ḥeqîqet jêk cihê kirin
sunete mixfî bû hingî dehr kirin

(14) sunete mixfî bû hingî dehr kirin
pedşê min ḥeqîqet nav da dihinare
gotê: 'ezîzê min, sunet li kû bû li kû girtibû ware

(15) çî melayekî minî ḥukm-rewa
mersûm nazil bû ji cewa
bi qudretê surra sunetê maliq westa bû li hewa

(16) bi qudretê maliq westa bû sunete
û bir *jiber[6] pedşê xo îcazete
gotê: 'ezîzê min, meḥzeret meḥibete

(17) çî mewlayekî minî ḥukm-girane
li nav van dana zor erkane
muḥebet û ġerzê nûrî dana wan bi nîşane

(18) ġerzê nûrî babe
dû cewher keftine nave
êk 'eyne êk çave

(19) êk 'eyne êk beṣere
pedşê min da durrê bi nedere
pedşa dizanit kî li sere kî li bere

(20) qendîl ji bana nizilî, muḥbet kefte nave
pedşê min pê hilîna bû çave
ka bêje min çî gote durrê jê weriya bû ave

(11) The Pearl became radiant with colours.
Before, there was neither Earth,
Nor Sky, nor a Throne.
Let someone tell me whom my King loved.

(12) My King is nicely-spoken.
Love (and the Cup)[19] were seated together.[20]
At that stage my King instituted measures and laws.

(13) My King established measures and laws in it,
He separated the *Sharī'a* and the Truth from each other,
The Tradition had been hidden; then it[21] was revealed.

(14) The Tradition was hidden, then it was revealed,
My King sent the Truth into (the world).
He said, "My dear, where was the Tradition, where had it established itself?"[22]

(15) What commanding lord of mine
Was sent, descending from the sky?
Through the Power, the Mystery of the Tradition hung suspended in the air.

(16) Through the Power the Tradition hung suspended;
It obtained authorisation from its King,
He said, "My dear, (your) intercession (?)[23] is an act of love."

(17) What lord of mine of weighty command
Has established many cornerstones amongst them?
He gave love and the direction of light[24] as signs for them.

(18) The direction of light is a doorway.
Two jewels were created,[25]
One is the eye *('eyn)*, and the other the eye *(çav)*.

(19) One is the eye and one is sight;
My King caused the Pearl to become visible.
The King knows the positions of all men.[26]

(20) The lamp came down from above, love came into (the world),
My King seized (?)[27] it, it became an eye.
Tell me what he said to the Pearl.[28] Water came from it.

(21) av ji durrê diweriya
buwe beḥr û pengiya
pedşê min merkeb dibest û nav gerriya

(22) pedşê min li merkebê dibû siware
pedşaye û her çar yare
têk seyrîn çar kinare
Lilaşê sekinîn, got: eve ḥeqq ware

(23) ḥeqq ware û sekinîn
pedşê min hêvên avête beḥrê û beḥr meyinîn
duxanek jê duxinî, her heft 'ezman pê nijinîn[7]

(24) pedşê min 'ezman bîraste
muḥbeta ji qevda raste
pedşê min mekan dane text veguhaste

(25) pedşê min li 'ezman kiribû ṣefere
ew bû çar[8] ṣefer kiribû ker bi kere
kire riknê çendî menbere

(26) aşiqa we jê xeberda
şaxekî dî jê berda
kire riknê çendî 'erda

(27) 'erd mabûy behtî
xedudekê xeditî
go: 'ezîzê min, 'erd bê wê surrê natebitî

(28) be'dî çil ṣalî bihijmare
'erdî bi xo ra negirt ḥeşare
heta Laliş bi nav da dihate xware

(29) Laliş ko dihate
li 'erdê şîn dibû nebate
pê zeynîn çîqas kinyate

(30) ko kinyat pê dizeynîn
çar qisme têk hincinîn
axe û ave û baye û agirî
qalibê adem pêġember jê nijnîn

(21) Water came from the Pearl
A sea came into being and water collected in it
My King saddled a horse and roamed over[29] it.

(22) My King mounted his horse,
The King and all four friends,[30]
Together they travelled the four corners.
They stopped at Lalish, saying, "This is the site of Truth."

(23) It is the site of Truth, and they stopped.
My King threw rennet into the sea and the sea coagulated,[31]
Smoke rose up from it, the seven heavens were built with it.

(24) My King adorned (?)[32] the sky,
Love (came) from the right side,[33]
My King assigned the places, he moved the Throne.

(25) My King had roamed in the sky,
As many as four times he had travelled over every part.
He founded a number of pulpits.[34]

(26) The Lovers have told you of this:
He separated another branch from it,
He established the earth everywhere.[35]

(27) The earth was still unsettled,[36]
A fissure appeared (?).[37]
He said, "My dear, without this Mystery the earth will not become tranquil."

(28) Afterwards, count forty years:
The earth did not become solid,[38]
Until Lalish came down into (the world).

(29) When Lalish came,
Plants grew on earth.
How many things[39] were adorned by them!

(30) As[40] the things were embellished by it,
Four elements became separate:[41]
Earth and Water and Wind and Fire.[42]
The body of the Prophet Adam was built from them.

(31) şembû dane esase
îniyê kir xilase
be'dî heft şed şal, heft surr hatine durra kase

(32) be'dî bi heft şed şal heft surr hatine hendave
qalib mabûy bê gave
gote: ruḥê, tu boçî naçiye nave

(33) ruḥê go li ba aşiqa: we me'lûme
heta bo min ji bana nîn şaz û qidûme[9]
nîveka ruḥê û qalibê adem pêġember zor tuxûme

(34) şaz û qidûm hatin û ḥidirî
û nûra muḥbetê hingivte serî[10]
ruḥ hat û qalibê adem pêġember iyorî[11]

(35) Adem pêġember ji wê kasê vedixwar û vedijiya
mest bû hejiya
goşt lê huriya, xun tê gerriya

(36) Adem pêġember ji wê kasê vedixware
kerameta wê kasê hate diyare
lew Adem pêġember pêngijî pê dibû şiyare

(37) Adem pêġember ji wê kasê vedixwar û pê xoş tê
kerameta wê kasê hat û gehiştê
lew adem pêġember hilgirt û bire behiştê

(38) pedşê minî rebb el-ṣemede
ji Adem wê bûn coqete
jêk vavartin heftî û dû millete

(39) bûy bedîla Nuḥê nebiya
qewmek dê dehr bit li dilê wan heye zor kifriya
ew jik wê li xudê xo bine yaxiya

(40) be'dî wê hêwanê
qewmek dê dehr bit di dil da namînit xofa îmanê
ew jik dê ġerq bin bi ava ṭofanê

(31) On Saturday He laid the foundations;
On Friday he had completed (the work).
After seven hundred years, the Seven Mysteries came into the Pearl of the Cup.

(32) Seven hundred years later the Seven Mysteries came overhead.[43]
The body had remained without movement.
They said, "Oh soul, why do you not enter?"

(33) The soul said in the presence of the Lovers, "you know (this):
As long as *shibab* and *def*[44] do not come[45] to me from above,
There will be a barrier[46] between[47] soul and body of the Prophet Adam."

(34) *Shibab* and *def* came and were present,
And the light of Love reached his head.
The soul came and manifested itself in the body of the Prophet Adam.

(35) The Prophet Adam drank from that cup and came to life,
He became intoxicated and trembled,
Flesh grew on him, blood circulated in his veins.

(36) The Prophet Adam drank from that cup,
The miraculous power of that cup manifested itself:
Thus the Prophet Adam sneezed and through it he became conscious.

(37) The Prophet Adam drank from that cup and liked it.
The miraculous power of that cup came and reached (him):
Thus the Prophet Adam was taken up and borne to heaven.

(38) My King is the Everlasting Lord.
From Adam (many) groups would[48] spring:
Seventy-two nations became separate from one another.

(39) There would come the period of the Prophet Noah:
A people would appear in whose heart there was much impiety
They[49] would become rebellious against their God.

(40) After that time,
A people would appear in whose hearts respect for the faith did not dwell.
They would drown in the water of the storms.

(41) be'dî wan bedîla
qewmek dê dehr bit ney 'edîla
nuqtek dê nazil bit ji qendîla
wê li nav dehr bit Brahîm Xelîla

(42) Brahîm Xelîl ji nuqteke ṣadiqe
bi sê ḥerfa dibû multeqe
heta xudê xo nas kir bi ḥeqqe

(43) heta xudê xo bi ḥeqq nas kir
ligel 'Azir û Nemrûd û ṣenema beḥs kir
lew giyanê xo ji kifriyê xilas kir

(44) be'dî wan Xelîlu'llaye
'İsaye û Mûsaye
Meḥmedê nû kamile
muḥiba wî dê higifte hindek dile
xitmê Mîra Seyyidê mursile

(45) ya Seyyid el-Mursilî
çend bedîl hatin û bihurî
çend xas hatin, min hijmirî
ew Siltan Şêxadiye, tacê[12] ji 'ewil heta bi axirî.

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 52-7.
2 Text: *melik*.
3 Text: *melik*.
4 Text: *dibûn*.
5 Text: *bo*.
6 Text: *bireber*.
7 Text: *nijînin*.
8 Text: *çara*. Correction by PX.
9 Text: *şar û qiwûme*. Correction by PX.
10 Text: *serê*.
11 Text: *iyorê*.
12 Text: *tance*. Correction by PX.

(41) After those periods,
An iniquitous people would appear.
A 'point'[50] would descend from the Lamp.
Among (them) Ibrahîm Khelîl would appear.

(42) Ibrahîm Khelîl is from a sincere 'point',
He would become the one to pronounce the three words,
Until he recognised his God as Truth.[51]

(43) Until he recognised his God as Truth,
He would dispute with Azir and Nimrud[52] and the Idols.
Thus he would free his spirit from impiety.

(44) After them there would be Khelîlu'llah,
Jesus and Moses.
The New Muhammad[53] is perfect.
Love for him would reach some hearts:
The last of the Princes is the Seyyid who is a Prophet.[54]

(45) Oh Seyyid among the Prophets!
Several periods have come and gone,
Several holy beings have appeared, I have counted them:
It is Sultan Sheykh Adi, the crown from the first until the last.

Commentary

1 The form *bêtin* is the regular 3rd sg. subj. pres. of *hatin* in some dialects of the Badinan area.
2 The text has *melik*, "king" here. The epithet is widely understood, however, to represent Ar. *malak*, "angel" (see Edmonds 1967: 31).
3 PX: i.e., the oceans of wisdom.
4 So PX.
5 Lit. "pearls which are jewels".
6 PX: "all"; the word *tebab* is thus a variant of *temam*.
7 A guess. PX thinks that the word stands for *kathīr al-ma'lūmāt*, "the one of much knowledge".
8 The significance of the line may be that the Supreme Being first existed only as the Lord of the Throne, and that he became the Prince of the world through the act of creation.
9 PX: i.e., "love".
10 The meaning of the line could be that Love informed the creation from the beginning.
11 For the image of the Pen see above, Ch. 4, Appendix, under "Sheykh Mûsa Sor".
12 Lit. "that I have been cast on the lot of the Sunna". The word *sunnet*, "tradition", generally denotes the Yezidi community.
13 The meaning of the line may be that the physical universe (the "Cup" containing the "Pearl") and spiritual reality ("Love") became differentiated, i.e., that the world became as it is now.
14 The words *kire riknê çendî*... must mean "founded a number of...", cf. below, T. 1. 25, 26.

15 Kurd. *rikn* (pl. *erkan*, Ar. *rukn, arkān*), is often translated as "pillar". Here the translation "cornerstone" is generally preferred.
16 PX: *hincinîn*, "to be under pressure, shudder". Cf. Izoli 1992: 202, *hincirîn*, "to be crushed" (*hincirîn* and *hincinîn* appear to be variants of the same verb). Cf. also below, T. 1. 30.
17 I.e., to the surface of the primeval ocean? The verb *helgerrîn* means, basically, "to revolve upward, be in upward motion" (İzoli 1992: 187).
18 The symbolism is interesting. When the Pearl, a whitish object which appears to contain all colours, burst open colours came into existence.
19 So PX.
20 I.e., it was before the world became as it is now. See above, n. 13.
21 One would expect the sg. *kir* where the text has *kirin*. Here and in many similar cases, rhyme is clearly felt to be more important than grammar.
22 Lit. "taken up (its) abode".
23 The meaning of *meḥzeret* is not certain. Cf. *mehder*, "intercession" (Rizgar 1993: 123).
24 Lit. "the aim of light". PX: i.e., the faculty of sight. This interpretation, which seems plausible, implies that the following lines refer to sight as a means by which man can apprehend Reality.
25 Lit. "came in".
26 Lit. "who is ahead and who in front". PX: i.e., who is far and who is near.
27 The Badini verb *înan* corresponds to Northern Kurm. *anîn*. The verb *hilînan* thus presumably has approximately the same meaning as *hilanîn*, "to lift, remove, take away" (İzoli 1992: 200). PX: "opened". The significance of the line may be that the Lord of this world seized the celestial light and made the sun.
28 I.e., his creative word is a mystery.
29 Lit. "among".
30 I.e., the four great saints.
31 The verb normally found is *meyîn* (İzoli 1992: 274).
32 Perhaps the text should be emended to **pîraste*, cf. Pers. *pîrastan*, "to adorn".
33 So PX.
34 I.e., places from which sacred knowledge can be learned (PX).
35 The form *'erda* occurs regularly in contexts where it can only be interpreted as a sg. obl. case. Both PX and EBS state that the word *çendî* can mean "everywhere" in Badini dialects.
36 Lit. "had remained molten" (İzoli 1992: 47; Rizgar 1993: 30, s.v. *behitîn*).
37 So PX. In Arabic, *xudūd* is a plural meaning "cheeks", but cf. the verb *xadda*, "to rend, cleave". The function of the ending of *xidûdekê* is not clear.
38 So PX. The word *heşare* may derive from Ar. *ḥašara*, "to compress".
39 Lit. "existing things".
40 While the translation "when" seems probable in the previous verse, where *ko* follows its antecedent, the function of the word is less clear here.
41 Lit. "were pressed asunder", cf. above, n. 16.
42 The importance of these 'elements', and their mystical identity with the four great saints, was repeatedly stressed by PX. See also above, Ch. 3.
43 So Hezhar 1368, s.v. *hendave*.
44 PX: *şaz*, "music of the *şibab*", *qidûm, qudûm*, "music of the *def*". It seems likely that the words could also be used for the instruments themselves, witness the fact that *şaz* and *qudûm* descended physically from above, see next verse. On the *def* and *shibab* see above, Ch. 3.
45 Lit. "as long as they are not there...".
46 PX: "there is much distance". *Tuxûm* = *tixûb*, "frontier, barrier" (cf. below, T. 2. 25).
47 So PX. Cf. Rizgar 1993: 137, *nîvek* (f.), "centre".

[48] In the following passage there is a apparent confusion between past and future tenses. In the translation, "would" will be used throughout.
[49] Lit. "they also".
[50] I.e., perhaps, an essential principle from which the full manifestation can arise. The concept seemed so familiar and self-evident to PX that he had difficulty in explaining it.
[51] Or "letters". For the "three letters" see below, T. 4. 17; 14. 23, 24. While the phrase "the three letters" is there tentatively taken to refer to the name 'Adī, the legend told in connection with the present passage is that Ibrahîm first saw a man, and said to himself, "that is God". Then he saw the sun, and declared that the sun was God. Then, when the sun went down, he discovered that the Creator is God, and pronounced this truth as the third word (PX).
[52] These men claimed to be God. Ibrahîm argued with them (PX).
[53] PX: the New Muhammad is the last of the prophets, who will appear. In view of the tense, however, it seems possible that the reference is to a figure who has already manifested himself.
[54] No Yezidi tradition appears to be attested to the effect that Sheykh Adi was a "Seyyid", a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. The last two verses of the *Qewl*, however, do appear to refer to him. Cf. also below, T. 17. 9.

2: Qewlê Afirîna Dinyayê[1]

(1) Ya rebbî dunya hebû tarî
têda tu nebûn mişk û marî
te zênda kir teze ḥalî
çu nema gul jê barî

(2) ya rebbî, tu hostayê kerîmî
te vekir rê û dirba tarî
tu hostayê her tiştî
bihuşt çêkir rengebî

(3) erd û ezman tu hebûn
dinya fire bê bine bû
însan ḥeywan jî tu nebû

(4) te xa lê saz kir
di behra da tenê hebû dirr
—ne dîmaşiya, ne dîmaşiya—
te xaş ruḥ anî ber
nûra xa lê peyda kir

(5) goşt û ruḥ hatine ber
nûra çavan lê hatine der
dest û pê kire, leş
lê şirîn kir got û bêj

(6) xudavendê me hostayê reḥmanî
rê û dergeyê dunyayê vekir
her tişt ji me ra der-anî
bû bihuşt erd û avanî

(7) xudavendê me tiştî dinasî
durra kasê[2] jê kir esase
jê peyda kir mêrê xase
got: eve hê nebes

(8) durr ji heybeta êzdan hincinî
taqet nekir, hilgerî
ji rengê îsan[3] xemilî
sôr û spî lê hêwirî

2: The Hymn of the Creation of the World

(1) Oh Lord, in the world there was darkness,
There were neither mice nor snakes.
You brought it to life for the first time[1]
Flowers almost[2] burst from it.

(2) Oh Lord, you are the generous master,
You opened the way and the road from(?)[3] darkness.
You are the master of all things,
You created Paradise, many-coloured.

(3) Earth and sky existed
The world was wide, without foundation;
There were neither men nor animals.

(4) You yourself brought order to it.
In the ocean there was only a pearl
—It did not progress, it did not progress—
You quickly[4] gave it a soul,
You made your own light manifest in it.

(5) Flesh and soul came to it,
The light of the eyes entered it.
Hands and feet you made, the body
In it you created sweet speech.

(6) Our Lord, you are the merciful master!
You opened the road and the gate to[5] the world.
All things you brought into being for us:
Paradise, earth and cultivated land came into being.

(7) Our Lord had a thing in mind.[6]
He established the Pearl of the Cup[7] from it,
From it he created the holy men.
He said, "This is still not enough".

(8) The Pearl burst open[8] in its awe of God,
It could not contain itself, it moved upward (?).
It became adorned with such colours:
Red and white became visible in it.

(9) êzdanê me bi reḥmanî
ḥisn û cemal ji me ra anî
destûr da qelemê qudretê
em avêtin nav surra mubetê

(10) havên avête beḥrê
beḥr pê meyanî
dexanek jê dexinî
çarde ṭebeq 'erd û ezman nijnî
êzdanê me durr der-anî

(11) mobet avête navê
jê peyda kir dû çavê
jê herikî pirr[4] avê

(12) av ji durrê herikî
bû beḥra bê serî bê binî
bê rê û bê derî
êzdanê me ser beḥrê gerrî

(13) êzdanê me sefîne çêkir
însan ḥeywan ṭeyr û tû
cot bo cot li sefîne siyar kir

(14) xudawendê me sefîne-sere
serîkî digerre çar kinare
sefîne qûl bû, av kete sere
marî[5] xirê xa dane bere

(15) xudawendê me sefîne ajot
ji kenar çû ber kenare
ajote lalişê got: heqq ware

(16) Siltan Êzdî xweş rêbere
Laliş ko riknê[6] beşere
niha Êzdî jê xebere

(17) ya rebbî, bang dikim şêxê mezin
çav kanî, av jê dizên
ya rebbî, te dinya çêkir, dinya bi xêr
însan têda dijîn bi têr

(9) Our God, in his mercy,
Brought forth goodness and beauty for us.
He gave a command to the Pen of Power:
We were thrown into the Mystery of Love.

(10) He threw rennet into the ocean.
The ocean coagulated because of it,
Smoke appeared from it.
He built heaven and earth, fourteen layers,
Our God brought the Pearl out.

(11) He threw Love[9] into it
From it he brought forth two eyes.[10]
A great deal of water flowed from it.[11]

(12) Water flowed from the Pearl,
It became an ocean without end, without beginning,[12]
Without road and without gate.
Our God circled over the water.

(13) Our God made a ship;
Men, animals and all sorts of birds
He gave a place in the ship, two by two.

(14) Our Lord is at the helm of the ship,[13]
The leader who(?)[14] roams in all four directions.
The ship sprang a leak, water came in,
The snake coiled itself over it.

(15) Our Lord sailed the ship,
He went from shore to shore,
He sailed to Lalish, and said, "It is the site of Truth".

(16) Sultan Êzî is a good guide.[15]
Lalish, which is the cornerstone of mankind,
Now the Yezidis[16] know about it.

(17) Oh Lord, I call upon the Great Sheykh
The well, the spring, water is born from it.
Oh Lord, you made the world, the world (is) good;
In it men live replete.

(18) şevêt reş, şevêt tarî
cî nema gul jê barîn
xudawendî, kerîm û reḥmanî

(19) kire rikn erd û ezman
da ber me ruḥ û ziman
xudavendê me rebb el-ṣemed
afirandin[7] şeş milyaket
cuda kir doj û cennet

(20) xudavendê me erda çêkir, ezman guhastin
mecaḷe[8] erdê bi rastin
nobeta qeza guhastin
li gunehbaran bû ruhistîn

(21) çiqas xudavendê me dinya kir sefere
sixir dikir dar û bere
pê nijnîne riknê menbere[9]

(22) Lalîş jorda anî xware
Lalîş bû xaş, cî û ware
li erdê şîn bû nebate
pê zeynî zêndî qinyate

(23) xudavandê me reḥmanî
çar qisim ji me ra danî
pê ḥebîba adem nijnî
xudavendê me reḥmanî
çar qisim li rû dinê danî

(24) yek ave, yek nûre
yek axe, yek jî agire
xudavandê me bi-reḥme
diyar kir saz û qudûme

(25) havîne adem hevsûr zor tixûbe
hefsûr gerriye, hat hendave
qalibê[10] adem mabû bê gave
go: ruḥo, çima naçî nava?

(26) xudavendê me qudrete
zeyandî çiqas xulyaqete
jêra çêkir doj û cenete

(18) Black nights, dark nights,
Everywhere[17] flowers appeared from it!
You are God, you are generous and merciful.

(19) He founded earth and sky,
He gave us a soul and a tongue.
Our Lord is the Eternal Lord,
He created six Angels,
He separated Hell and Paradise.

(20) Our Lord created the world, he moved the sky (upward),
It became possible to flatten the earth (?),[18]
It was the appointed time[19] to move (the Sky) upward.
He became a scourge[20] to sinners.

(21) What a long time our Lord roamed in the world!
He made trees and stones subservient to his will.
In it he fashioned foundations, pulpits.[21]

(22) He brought Lalish down from above
Lalish became pleasant everywhere.
On earth, plants began to grow,
With them he adorned the existing things as he brought them to life.[22]

(23) Our Lord, you are merciful
You brought four elements[23] for us.
With them, you fashioned the beloved of Adam.
Our Lord, you are merciful,
You brought four elements into the world.

(24) One is Water, one is Light,
One is Earth, one is Fire.
Our Lord in (his) mercy
Made visible the *def* and *shibab*.

(25) Between[24] Adam and the Seven Mysteries there is a strong barrier.
The Seven Mysteries circled around and came overhead.
The shape of Adam had remained without movement.[25]
They said, "Oh soul, why do you not enter it?"

(26) Our Lord is powerful.[26]
He has brought to life[27] so many creatures!
For them he has created Hell and Paradise.

(27) xudavendê me erd çêkir, ezman guhastin
mecale erdê bi rastin
nobeta qeza rastin
ji însan[11] qencîtî xastin

(28) Laliş ji ezman dihate
erd şîn dibû giya hate[12]
pê çeyran çiqas qinyate

(29) xudavendê me înî kir esase
şembî birrî kerase
çar-şemê kir xilase
hevsed sal paş hevsûr hat durran û kase[13]

(30) hevsed salî ji berî adem jimare
erdê xiyare negirtî şiyare
heta lalişa nûrî navda henare

(31) û banda ruḥ hedirî
hat û çû bihirî
nûra mobetê hingavte serî
hat qalibê adem da heyorî[14]

(32) xudvendê me reḥmanî
kasa surrê ji adem ra anî
av ji kasê vexar, vejîya
cîda mest bû, hejîya

(33) goşt jê xast wî ruhî
xwîn canê wî gerrî
xêret[15] kete nav serî

(34) adem xwar ji wê kasê
surra kasê xaş lê tê
keremeta kasê gihîştî bi huş tê
meleka milê wî girt avête bihuştê

(35) adem ji kasê vedixare
keremeta kasê pêve diyare
xa bênijî, bû hişyare

(36) go: ev erd çi xaşe
gîhayê şîn ser geşe
roj roja mêrê keleşe

(27) Our Lord has created the earth, he moved Heaven (upward),
It became possible to flatten the earth (?),
It was the appointed time to flatten it (?).[28]
Acts of goodness are demanded from man.

(28) Lalish came (down) from heaven
The earth became green, plants came
How many beings grazed on it!

(29) Our Lord laid the foundation on Friday.
On Saturday he drew up a plan,[29]
On Wednesday he completed it.
Seven hundred years afterwards,the Seven Mysteries came to the Pearl[30] and the Cup.

(30) Count seven hundred years before Adam.
The earth was below[31] and did not become settled.[32]
Until Lalish the luminous was sent[33] into (the world).

(31) And the soul was present, on high,
It came and went and passed,
The Light of Love reached the head
It came and became manifest in the body of Adam.

(32) Our Lord, you are merciful.
You brought Adam the cup of the Mystery,
He drank water from the cup, and came to life.
Immediately he became drunk, and trembled.

(33) That soul demanded flesh from him,[34]
Blood circulated in his body,
Ardour entered his head.

(34) Adam drank from that cup,
The Mystery of the cup was agreeable to him,
He reached the blessing of the cup, and became conscious.[35]
The angels seized his shoulders and took him to Paradise.[36]

(35) Adam drank from the cup
The blessing of the Cup became manifest in him
He coughed(?)[37] and woke up.

(36) He said, "How pleasant this earth is.
Green plants are everywhere,
The time is the time of strong men."

(37) xudavendê me reḥmanî
ji me ra keremek anî
dem û dezgê baş danî

(38) hey ademo rû dinê
her dem bike îmanî
xudavend em xilas kirin ji tofanê

(39) gelê mirîdan bikin karê
xêra qudretê me hate xwarê
erd û ezman didin xêrê
hûn jî bibin xudanê xêrê
qet ji bîr nekin vê xeberê

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 58-62.
2 Text: *kesê*.
3 Text: *insan*.
4 Text: *per*. Correction by PX.
5 Text: *marê*.
6 Text: *rikî*. Correction by PX.
7 Text: *efirandin*.
8 Text: *micale*. Correction by PX.
9 Text: *maxbere*. Correction by PX.
10 Text: *ġalib*.
11 Text: *îsan*.
12 Text: *giyate*. Correction by PX.
13 Text: *durra nikase*. Correction by PX.
14 Text: *hêorî*.
15 Text: *xîret*.

(37) Our Lord, you are merciful.
You have performed an act of grace for us,
You have laid down time and directions[38] well.

(38) Oh man, on the face of the earth,
At all times have faith!
The Lord has delivered us from the storm.

(39) Let the *mirîd*[39] do their work,
The blessing of the Power has come down to us.
Earth and heaven grant good things,
You also should become people of good deeds!
Never forget this!

Commentary

1 So PX.
2 Lit. "nothing remained". The part. *çû* is the Badini equivalent of Standard Kurm. *tu*, "at all".
3 Lit. "of". The translation assumes that the form *tarî* represents Standard Kurm. *tariyê*.
4 PX: *xaş* "happily, quickly".
5 Or "of".
6 Lit. "he knew a thing".
7 I.e., the Pearl which was contained in the Cup (of the Heavens?). Cf above, T. 1. 12.
8 See above, T. 1. 9.
9 I.e., the divine life-giving power.
10 The reference here may be to the Sun and Moon, seen as the gateways between Heaven and Earth. The somewhat similar passage T. 1. 18, 19, on the other hand, apparently refers to human eyes and the faculty of sight.
11 I.e., from the Pearl; cf. the next verse. The reference to the flowing of water as a salient feature of the Creation can be explained as deriving ultimately from the Indo-Iranian cosmogony; see also above, Ch. 3.
12 Lit. "without surface, without bottom".
13 Lit. "is the head of the ship".
14 The translation assumes that *serîkî* is the equivalent of Standard Kurm. *serekê* (see İzoli 1992: 374, s.v. *serek*). The word could also be a contraction of *serê yekî*.
15 Here the finding of Lalish seems to be attributed to Sultan Êzî, who is thus more or less identified with God, and presumably in a sense with Sheykh Adi (cf. above, Ch. 4).
16 So PX. The word could also refer to Sultan Êzîd.
17 So PX. Lit. "no place remained".
18 So PX, the grammar is not clear. Cf. below, v. 27.
19 Lit. "the turn of the divine judgement".
20 See İzoli 1992: 364, s.v. *ruhstên*.
21 I.e., sources of knowledge, cf. T. 1. 25.
22 Lit. "with them he adorned and brought to life the existing things". The translation assumes that the form *zêndî* is a contraction of *zeyandî* (see below, v. 27). PX, who explains the word as a variant of the Standard Kurm. adj. *zindî*, "alive", translates "living existing things". It is, however,

unusual in Kurdish to find an adjective preceding the noun it qualifies.
[23] Lit. "parts".
[24] So PX for *havîne*; unconfirmed.
[25] Lit. "step".
[26] Lit. "has power", or "is power".
[27] The translation assumes that *zeyandî* is a variant of Standard Kurm. *jiyandiye* or *jiyandine*.
[28] Cf. above, v. 20.
[29] PX: *kiras birrîn* , "to make a detailed plan", unconfirmed.
[30] Lit. "pearls". The anomalous ending was presumably adopted for euphonic reasons.
[31] The form *xiyar* is probably a variant of Standard Kurm. *xwar*, "low". The development /w/>/y/ is normal, for instance, in the speech of Dihok.
[32] Cf. T. 1. 28. The line is clearly corrupt.
[33] So PX. Standard Kurmanji would be *hinarte*. PX attributes such deviations to questions of rhyme.
[34] I.e., it seems, from God.
[35] Lit. "and comes to consciousness".
[36] Lit. "cast him into Paradise".
[37] So PX for *bênijî*, unconfirmed. If this is correct, the literal meaning of the words is "he coughed himself". In T. 1. 35, Adam is said to have "sneezed" (*pêngijî*) when he became conscious.
[38] So PX for *dezgê*, which is a variant of *destgeh*.
[39] I.e., the Yezidi laymen, see above, Ch. 5.

3: Qewlê îmanê[1]

(1) îmane, çi nîşane
ne 'erde, ne jî 'ezman
ne dinyaye, ne bajare, ne jî kinyaye
ne Mîr Birahîmê Ademe, ne jî Xurristane

(2) renge îmanê çiye
kilîma enzeliye
navê Şêxê 'Ediye

(3) Şêxê 'Edî xwe sultane
çarde tevek 'erd û 'ezman dide beyane
ne luhe, ne qeleme
barî nod hezar salî cem teme

(4) barî nod hezar salî[2] li wê bûm
bê bavî, bê dê bûm
ji qudreta padşê bûm

(5) ji qudreta wî padşayî
dame destê wî ostayî
mirra çê dikir xweşî û şayî

(6) xweşî û şayî çê dikirî
seyido tuyî[3] bin Xidir
te da destê min kaseke bikir

(7) ew kasa te mirra anî
wekî min zanî, wekî min vedixarî
te danîme ser 'ulmekî Qatanî

(8) we Qataniya dibême
istûna tore erkanekî çême
meda didim nav dikrê Sultan Êzdîd, erkaneke çême

(9) ev bedîlê derkevin
ev bedîlê levkevin
ev bedîlê mêra şik hevin

3: The Hymn of the Faith

(1) The faith, what a sign[1] it is!
There was[2] no earth, and no heaven,
There was no world, no town and no existing things;
There was neither Prince Ibrahîm, son of Adam,[3] nor Khorasan.

(2) What is the colour of the faith?
It is the pre-eternal Word,
It is the name of Sheykh Adi.

(3) Sheykh Adi is truly Sultan,
He brought forth the fourteen spheres of earth and heaven.
There was neither Tablet nor Pen.
"I was with you for as much as ninety thousand years."[4]

(4) "For as much as ninety thousand years I was there,
Without father, without mother,
I was there through the Power of the King."

(5) Through the Power of that King
I was handed over to that master
He prepared happiness and bliss for me.[5]

(6) Happiness and bliss he brought about
Oh Seyyid,[6] you are the son of Khidr
You handed me the primeval cup.

(7) That cup you brought to me,
As I knew it, as I drank it,
You set me on a (path of) wisdom[7] belonging to the Qatani (sheykhs).

(8) I tell you, oh Qatanis,
For your column I am a good cornerstone,[8]
I give praise during the *dhikr* of Sultan Êzîd,[9] I am a good cornerstone.

(9) At those times when they will fall out,
At those times when they will fight each other,
At those times when (even) holy men[10] will have doubts.

(10) ev bedîlê mêra bivine şike
herça qesta mala Adiya damina xerqe bike
Sultan Êzdîd mirazê wî cem xwe hasil bike

(11) durra wê behrê denare
tê seyran herçar yare
ya Şêxadî, mêra tê heve pare

(12) çi erkaneke dikir
nav mêra da bû bikir
xerqe hat xelatê Şêxûbekir

(13) çi erkaneke ev hal
nav mêrada bû delal
xerqe hat xelatê Şêxê Şelal

(14) çi erkaneke neder
nav mêrada bû bedel
xerqe hat xelatê Şemsê Teter

(15) padşayê min erkan cor kir
xerqe Eyn el-Beyzayê derxist
ser kefa destê xwe mor kir
ewlide Êzdîdê Sor kir

(16) erkanekê tînin
xerqê Şêxadî ser datînin
mala Adiya re dişînin

(17) mala Adiya şehdeve
Kaniya Sipî qul beve
xerqe îmane

(18) rengê îmanê ji çiye
kelîma enzeliye
navê Şêxê 'Ediye

(19) dîwarekî datînim cisne
temam dikim pesne
dîwarî bê binyaye
ostayî pê re sergidaye

(10) At those times when (even) holy men will have doubts,
Whoever (?)[11] seeks the house of the family of Adi, (seeking to touch) the hem of their *khirqe*,
Sultan Êzîd will fulfil his wishes (when he is) with him.

(11) He sent[12] the Pearl of that Ocean!
All four Friends[13] are coming to visit it.
Oh Sheykh Adi, holy men shall have a part in it.

(12) What a cornerstone[14] he made!
It was pristine at the time of[15] the holy men:
The *khirqe* came to Sheykh Obekr.[16]

(13) What a cornerstone at that time,
Came to be held dear among the good men:
The *khirqe* came to Sheykh Shelal.[17]

(14) What a visible cornerstone,
Took his turn among the good men:
The *khirqe* came to Shems the Tartar.[18]

(15) My King created a chain of cornerstones.[19]
He removed his *khirqe* at the *Kaniya Sipî*,[20]
He 'baptised'[21] it with his own hand.
He created the descendants of Red Êzîd.[22]

(16) They bring a 'cornerstone',
They invest him with the *khirqe* of Sheykh Adi,
They send him to the House of the family of Adi.

(17) Let the House of the family of Adi be witnesses,
The *Kaniya Sipî* was brought forth,[23]
It is the *khirqe*[24] of the faith.

(18) What does the colour of the faith derive from?
It is the pre-eternal Word,
The name of Sheykh Adi.

(19) I establish an incomplete structure,[25]
Throughout I give praise,
A structure without a foundation,
The master is distressed by it.

(20) çil qîzê behrî li wê bû
yeke nûranî tê bû,
lal, durr anî bû, jê bû

(21) lal û durrê wa behra
teslîm kirne wa ixtiyara
deng *nake[4] hemû şaha ra

(22) siveye, rojê pence dane
mêr, milyaketa silavet vedane
nîşanga Sultan Êzdîd xerqe bûn, rû erda dimane

(23) siveye, rojê pence dadihiştin
mêr, milyaketa silavet radihiştin
nîşanga Sultan Êzdîd xerqe bûn, rû erda dihiştin

Textual Notes

[1] From O. and J. Jelîl 1978: 49-51. The transcription used in this source, based on another sub-dialect of Kurmanji, differs considerably from the orthography adopted in this book. For the sake of consistency the text has been rewritten in the latter spelling as far as possible. Where dialectal peculiarities affect the rhyme, however, (e.g. *hevin* for Standard Kurm. *hebin* in v. 9), they have been preserved in the transcription.
[2] Text adds *il*.
[3] Text: *tî*.
[4] Text: *neçe*.

(20) Forty maidens of the ocean[26] were in it,[27]
Among them there was one luminous one,
She had collected[28] rubies and pearls, and arose from it.[29]

(21) The rubies and pearls of those oceans,
She offered to those venerable men.
She would not listen to (the entreaties of) all the kings.

(22) It is morning, the day has five watches,[30]
The holy men and angels distributed well-being,
The symbols (?)[31] of Sultan Êzîd were the *khirqes*, they stayed on earth.

(23) It is morning, five (times) a day they brought down (well-being),
The holy men and angels took away well-being,
The symbols (?) of Sultan Êzîd were the *khirqes*, these they left on earth.

Commentary

1 The word *nîşan*,"sign", is commonly used among the Yezidis for a variety of phenomena which can be regarded as proofs of a religious truth. See above, Ch. 4.
2 The historical present is used throughout this verse, and again in v. 3.
3 A garbled version, obviously, of the name of Ibrāhīm b. Adham, the well-known Sufi who was born a prince.
4 Lit. "I am with you", cf. above, n. 2.
5 While the speaker of the preceding verse is presumably a divine being, the "I" of this passage appears to be a man, possibly Adam (see vv. 6, 7, and compare, e.g., T. 1. 34, 35, 36).
6 The word *seyyid* also occurs in T. 1. 43, 44, where it may refer to Sheykh Adi.
7 So PX, who states that this refers to the teaching of *Qewls* and *Beyts*.
8 The translation assumes that *tore* is a variant of Standard Kurm. *te re*. The sense of the line may be that, while the Sheykhs have a high position, they need the support of ordinary people.
9 This text consistently gives the name as Êzdîd. For the sake of clarity, the form 'Êzîd' is used in the translation.
10 The word *mêr* is often denotes saints or holy men. The use of the word in vv. 22, 23, below, suggests that it is used here in this sense.
11 The form *herça* presumably represents Standard Kurm. *herkî*.
12 See above, T. 2. 30.
13 I.e., the four Great Angels.
14 The word *erkan*, which represents the Ar. broken pl. *arkān*, here has a sg. indefinite ending, and is the formal subject of a sg. verb. It is therefore presumably to be taken as a singular. The word denotes the pristine institutions and their incumbents.
15 Lit. "among".
16 I.e., Sheykh Obekr became the leader of the community.
17 Unless the word is a variant of *Jelal*, and refers to Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, no prominent figure of this name is known in the tradition.
18 I.e., Shams-e Tabrīzī, the derwish who inspired Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. The inhabitants of Tabriz, being Turkic-speakers, can be referred to as "Tartars" (PX).

[19] Lit. "made cornerstone(s) as a chain". The translation assumes that *cor* is a variant of Standard Kurm. *col*, "chain". The line indicates that the primeval leadership came to a succession of men.
[20] On this spring see above, Ch. 4.
[21] I.e., he immersed it in the holy water.
[22] See also above, Ch. 4, Appendix, under "Êzîd". The banner of Êzîd was red (PX).
[23] Lit. "was pierced". The legend is that Sheykh Adi hit the rock with his mendicant's stick, and by doing so brought forth the *Kaniya Sipî*, cf. also above, Ch. 4. The same legend is told about other springs.
[24] I.e., this miracle was the visible manifestation or attribute of the faith.
[25] Lit. "wall". As the reference is to the *Qewl* itself, the translation "structure" seems apt.
[26] PX: *behrî* "nubile". No confirmation could be found, and the translation "maiden of the ocean" seems to yield better sense.
[27] I.e., in the primeval ocean.
[28] Lit. "brought".
[29] I.e., from the ocean.
[30] So PX. Cf. *dahn*, "period" (Rizgar 1993: 59).
[31] The word *nîşangeh* generally means "target" (Rizgar 1993: 137). The basic meaning of the word, however, is "place of sign", hence perhaps "symbol, outward sign, manifestation".

4: Qewlê Behra[1]

(1) rojekê difikirîm şevan û roja
demameke[2] digrim li ber xweda

(2) çi beḥreke mezine
qendîleke jî[3] bê bine
çar cewê jê çûne

(3) çi beḥreke qeyase
rukneke çar esase
çar esase ruknekî xelqê xase[4]
dîwanê Şêxadî *ko *zivete[5] livase

(4) çi beḥreke bê ḥedde
Padşê mêrayî ṣemede[6]
medeta şêxê xweme
zor medḥê şêxê xwe dideme

(5) çi beḥreke emîqe[7]
padşê mêrayî şifîqe[8]
dûr bûm, hatime nêzîke

(6) dûr bûm, hatime kinara
pêl didame du cara
hewara şêxê xweme
zor medḥê şêxê xwe dideme

(7) minê dîye beḥrek
ordê da heye dîwarek
ser sekinîbû şêresiyarek

(8) minê dîye emanek
xewle dibû feqîrek
ew jî dikir ray[9] û tedbîrek [10]

(9) padşê min mezine
xudanê yanzdeh cot ên[11] qewşine[12]
nefûsê wan leşkerê giran va diçûne

4: The Hymn of the Oceans

(1) One day I was pondering night and day,
I seek protection with God.[1]

(2) What a great ocean he is!
He is also an endless[2] light.
Four streams[3] have sprung from it.

(3) What a gigantic[4] ocean he is!
Its foundation consists of four cornerstones,[5]
The four foundations are a cornerstone for the holy men,
The assembly of Sheykh Adi, which must observe the prescribed way of dressing (?).[6]

(4) What an endless ocean he is!
He is the everlasting King of the good men.
I am the supporter of my Sheykh,[7]
I give much praise[8] to my Sheykh.

(5) What a deep ocean he is!
He is the compassionate King of the good men.
I was far away, I came near.

(6) I was far away, I came to the shores
The waves removed me[9] again
I am ready to help my Sheykh,
I give much praise to my Sheykh.

(7) I have seen an ocean,
In the middle (of it) there is a wall,
On it has come to dwell one whose steed is a lion.[10]

(8) I have seen a (way to) safety,
A Feqîr was alone,
But he[11] had an idea and a plan.[12]

(9) My King is great:
He is the Lord of the eleven pairs who were ready for battle.[13]
Thus the numbers[14] of that large army departed.[15]

(10) padşê min erş dikir
ferş dikir, nexşê xwe dadanî
neqaşê hûr lê dikir

(11) du cindîya rimek digerrandin
wan cindîya rime[13] digerrandin
hûn şehde bin, boy kinarê xwedê ra

(12) padşê min zelpek tê[14] da
donzde hezar silavet ber vedida
nav dikrê sultan Êzdîdê min dergekî durrê ra

(13) *tinê *yekî ji wanî rûniştiye, du dî jî *yê piyane[15]
dilê min wan va eyane
fitîleke çar çirane

(14) çar çirayê fitîlekê
heft dergene kilîmeke
yanzde xendeqeyê[16] kûre
hefte tarîne,[17] çare nûrin

(15) qadî menberin[18]
kitêve defterin
rukneke çar beşerin

(16) çar beşerê ruknekî
du ta min dîne cîkî
nav dikrê Sultan Êzdîdê min hildan avêtine sîkî

(17) herfê[19] navê wî asîne
yek wan Meke, yek Medîne
xazi ko[20] mi bizanibiya kî 'erdîne

(18) hûn xudanê nedera
Melek Şêx Sin sekiniye ser membera
vedike qewla, dixûne deftera

(19) dewreş Qatanî çar me'nî digotin
bang da[21] nayêne gotinê
axretê nayêne firotinê

(10) My King fashioned the Throne,
He fashioned[16] a carpet, he laid his plan.
Like a draughtsman he concentrated on it.

(11) Two commoners[17] whirled a spear,
Those commoners whirled their spears
You be witnesses for the love of God.[18]

(12) My King hit it.[19]
It returned twelve thousand salutations.
During the *dhikr* of my Sultan Êzîd, (there came) an opening[20] to the Pearl.

(13) Only one of them was seated, two others are standing up.
In my heart I can see them thus:[21]
(As) the one wick of four lamps!

(14) Four lamps with one wick![22]
There are seven doorways for the one Word.
Eleven are a deep ditch:[23]
Seven are dark, four are luminous.[24]

(15) They are the judges and the pulpits,[25]
They are the book and the records:[26]
(From) the one cornerstone they are the four humans.[27]

(16) Four humans from one cornerstone.
Two of them I have seen somewhere:
During the *dhikr* of my Sultan Êzîd they were lifted up and thrown into the marketplace.[28]

(17) His name consists of three letters.[29]
One of them is in Mecca, one is in Medina:
I wish I knew where[30] they are on earth.[31]

(18) You people of understanding,[32]
Melek Sheykh Hesen has taken his place on the pulpit.
He intones the hymns, he reads the records.

(19) The Qatani derwishes expounded four words of meaning.[33]
They are not pronounced aloud (?),[34]
In the hereafter they will not be sold.[35]

Textual Notes

[1] From O. and J. Jelîl 1978: 51-3. The transcription has been modified as in T. 3, q.v.
[2] Text: *damamekê.*
[3] Text: *je.*
[4] Text: *xaliqê xasê.*
[5] Text: *k'uzivete.*
[6] Text: *semende.*
[7] Text: *emlîq.*
[8] Text: *siblîqe.* Emendation by PX.
[9] Text: *raw.*
[10] Text: *t'ivdîrek.*
[11] Text: *cotin.*
[12] So PX. Text: *qoşine.*
[13] Text: *rima.*
[14] Text: *te.*
[15] Text: *t'ime yejî wanî rrûniştiye, dudejya p'iyane.*
[16] Text: *xendeqayî.*
[17] Text: *te'rîne.*
[18] Text: *memberin.*
[19] Text: *herfa.*
[20] Text, repeatedly: *xazilk.*
[21] Text: *bandê.*

Commentary

1 The translation assumes that *demam* represents Ar. *dhimām*, "right, protection, security". PX explained the word as meaning "fancy, intuition", but no confirmation could be found.
2 Lit. "without bottom".
3 The form *cew* is probably a variant of Standard Kurd. *co*, "canal, trench".
4 So PX, here and in T. 13. 28. Cf. Ar. *qiyās*, "record".
5 I.e., the four Great Angels.
6 The translation assumes that *zivet* represents Ar. *ḍabṭ*, "exactitude, observing the rules". PX states that the word denotes "a type of *khirqe* worn by pious people", but no confirmation could be found.
7 In view of the parallel with *hewarê şêxî xweme* in v. 6, and of the sound change found in the form *ḥedd û sete* in T. 1. 12 (from Ar. *ḥadd wa sadd*, cf. *ḥedd û sedd* in T. 1. 13), it seems likely that Kurm. *medeta* represents Ar. *madad*.
8 Lit. "many praises".
9 So PX.
10 For the image of a saint riding a lion as a symbol of miraculous power cf. below, T. 16. 9, 10.
11 Lit. "he, in his turn".
12 The reference may be to Sheykh Adi.
13 So PX for *qewşin*. The "eleven" may be the male and female "children of Êzdîna Mîr", cf. below, v. 14.
14 Lit. "souls", hence "numbers of souls".
15 The reference is obscure.
16 PX: "spread out".
17 Or "soldiers", cf. T. 9. 1, Comm. n.1.
18 So PX. Lit. "for the side of God".
19 I.e., the Pearl.
20 Lit. "doorway".
21 The grammar is puzzling. Unless *eyan* can be used as a substantive (so PX, unconfirmed), the line should mean "my heart is thus clear to them". In view of the context, however, there can be little doubt as to the meaning of the line.
22 Lit. "the four lamps of one wick". The reference is obviously to the four Great Angels.
23 Sic. The meaning of the line is obscure.
24 PX: the reference is to the children of Êzdîna Mîr, who had seven daughters and four sons.
25 I.e., sacred knowledge can be learned from them, cf. above, T. 1. 25, Comm. n. 34.
26 I.e., they represent religious knowledge.
27 PX stresses the identity of these "four humans" (i.e., the four Great Angels), with the four 'elements', earth, wind, water and fire.
28 I.e., the life of this world. Kurd. *sîk* is a variant of *sûq*, "market" (PX).
29 I.e., perhaps, *'ayn*, *dāl*, and *yā*, ("'Adī"). The translation assumes that *asîne* is a corruption of *sisêne*, cf. below, T. 14. 23, 24. If this is not correct, the line means "the letters of his name are *Yāsīn*".
30 The form *kî* is a variant of Standard Kurm. *kû*.
31 The implication is that the true holy cities can only be found by the heart of the mystic.
32 The equivalent of Pers. *ṣāḥeb naẓar*.
33 Lit. "meanings".
34 A guess, taking the form *bandê* of the original to represent *bang de*, "in a loud voice".
35 PX: viz. because they are too precious. I.e., they will not be given up for something better.

5: Qewlê Şêxubekir[1]

(1) 'aşiq û me'šûqêd kurrê
me yarek divê li vê ḥerfêy mukurrê
ka durre ji padşaye yan padşa ji durrê

(2) 'aşiqê 'êrifê[2] çêye
teftêşa me ji wê ciwabêye
ka durre ji padşaye yan padşa ji durrêye

(3) 'aşiqê 'êrifê zane
werîn ji mirre biden beyane
durr texte û padşa lê girt mekane?

(4) padşê min durr ji xo cihê kir
seyrî seyran lê kir
sêwirî û ber pê kir

(5) padşê min durr ji xo vavare
durr qendîleke maldare
qendîlê nûr sitare

(6) durre ji kilîma padşêye
xerqe der-keftî jêye
dayim mêra silave lêye

(7) Şêxubekr go:
'ezîzê min, ji mêj li vê ḥerfê ḥewceme
çiqas zêr û malê bîr pê dibeme
ḥemûy li oġira xerqey neder dideme[3]

(8) 'ezîzê min ji mêj li vê ḥerfê guhdêrim
çiqas zêr û malê bîr pê dibîrim[4]
ḥemûy li oġira xerqey neder dasipêrim[5]

(9) li pê neqilandibû feqîra
hincî yê terk kir xirabe fêniya wêra[6]
dê xelat ken miftan û kilîla

(10) ew kilîl û ew miftene
bi destê wan cindiya ve dibine
her pênc ferzêd ḥeqîqetê roja axiretê bora dişehdene

5: The Hymn of Sheykh Obekr

(1) Lovers and loved ones all,[1]
We need a friend to explain[2] this question:
Did the Pearl come from the King or the King from the Pearl?

(2) Lovers are wise,[3]
Our search is for an answer to this:
Whether the Pearl came from the King or the King from the Pearl.
(3) Wise Lovers who are initiates,
Come and explain to me:
Is the Pearl the Throne, and did the King take his seat there?

(4) My King separated the Pearl from himself.
He gazed on it with concentration,
He made a mental image[4] and brought it into existence.

(5) My King detached the Pearl from himself.
The Pearl is a plentiful light,
The luminous light is (like) a star.

(6) The Pearl comes from the word of the King,
The *khirqe*[5] appeared from it,
Always holy men receive salutations because of it.[6]

(7) Sheykh Obekr said,
"My dear, I have needed this word for a long time;
As much gold and riches as I can think of,
I shall give all of it for the sake of the visible *khirqe*."

(8) "My dear, I have been listening for this word for a long time.
As much much gold and riches as I can think of,[7]
I shall relinquish all of it for the sake of the visble *khirqe*."

(9) The Feqîrs followed[8] it.
Thus, he who has renounced the desolate, transitory evil,
On him they will bestow the keys.[9]

(10) Those keys,
They will bring to the hands of those commoners.[10]
All five obligatory acts of Truth will bear witness for them[11] on the Last Day.

(11) padşê min 'ewil ku mîr bû
xudanê cêşê kibîr bû
bi heft surrêd Silṭan Êzî ra-y xebîr bû

(12) padşê min yê padşeh
neqaşê çendî neqşe
Silṭan Êzî dizanit kî li bere kî li paşe

(13) padşê minî li weḥdaniye
dosta dilê min pê di-'ilmiye
xilmeta bi[7] sedq ye weye wekî padşê min pê diviye

(14) padşê min 'ewil ku mîr[8] bû
xudanê cêşê kibîr bû
bi heft surrêd Silṭan Êzîd ra-y xebîr bû

(15) padşê min surr li sema
berî ne lewḥ hebû ne qeleme
ya Silṭan Êzî, liba te ew se'ete ew deme

(16) berî ne qelem hebû ne lewḥe
me yarek divê vê ḥerfê şiro[9] biket, ye li kuwe
melek êk bû bûne duwe

(17) liber firwara padşêye
teftêşa me ji wê ciwabêye
melek dû bûn bûne sêye

(18) padşê minî cebare
ji ba hati bû firware
melek sê bûn bûne çare

(19) padşê minî mizênce
melek çar bûn bûne pênce
her pênc bûne ṣifetê[10] her êk û renge[11]

(20) dilê min li vê yekê yî xoşe
melek pênc bûn bûne şeşe
her şeş bûne melekêd 'erşe

(21) padşê min xoş kir suḥbete
lêk rûniştin muḥbete
melek şeş bûn bûne hefte

(11) My King, ever since[12] he was the Prince,[13]
Was the leader of a vast army.
With the Seven Mysteries of Sultan Êzîd, he was the knowing one.

(12) My King, the King,
Is the planner of several plans.
Sultan Êzîd knows who is in front and who is behind.

(13) My King is in (a state of) oneness,
The friend[14] of my heart was aware of this.
Sincere service is such[15] as befits my King.
(14) My King, ever since he was the Prince,
Was the leader of a vast army.
With the Seven Mysteries of Sultan Êzîd, he was the Knowing one.

(15) My King is the Mystery in Heaven.
Before, there was neither Tablet nor Pen.
Oh Sultan Êzîd, this moment, this hour is in your hands.[16]

(16) Before, there was neither Pen nor Tablet.
We need a friend to explain[17] this word; where is he?[18]
There was one angel, he became two.

(17) By order of the King,
Our search is for an answer to this.
There were two angels, they became three.

(18) My King is the all-powerful.
From him came the Command.
There were three angels, they became four.

(19) My King is the almighty
There were four angels, they became five.
All five shared one another's character and qualities.

(20) My heart is happy because of this:
There were five angels, they became six.
All six became the angels of the Throne.

(21) My King made (his) speech pleasant
They were seated together in Love.[19]
There were six angels, they became seven.

(22) her heft ku di-'efirîn
bi rastiyê lêk di-êyorîn[12]
bi muḥbetê bi nedera êk didebirîn

(23) padşê min we kire raye
feqîrek şand her her av ênaye
nav lê kir 'eyn el-beyzaye

(24) feqîra ew[13] jê xeber da
ji 'esman heta bi 'erda
ji 'erda heta bi ser da
ava kaniya sipî şifeta[14] bi ser çiqas derda

(25) padşê minî cebare
ji durrê 'erfan dibûn çare
axe û ave û baye û nare

(26) her çar ku difaxirin
bi kê di-ênan û bi kê dibirin
bi kê mersûmê ji durrê farîq kirin

(27) her çarêd diruste
ne dixwarin ne diviste
bi kê mersûmê ji durrê ve diguhiste

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman 1985: 97-101.
2 Text: *'êrifî.*
3 Text: *deme*. Correction by PX.
4 Text: *dibêrim.*
5 Text: *darsipêrim*. Correction by PX.
6 Text: *wûra.*
7 Text: *bê*. Correction by PX.
8 Text: *wîr*.
9 Text: *şiru*. Correction by PX.
10 Text: *şifhetê.*
11 Text: *rênce.*
12 Text: *di êyurîn.*
13 Text: *w.*
14 Text: *şifheta.*

(22) All seven, when they were created,
Were exactly alike.
In Love, gazing at one another, they passed the time.[20]

(23) My King decided thus:
He sent a Feqîr, (who) brought forth water for always,[21]
He named it the *Kaniya Sipî*.

(24) The Feqîrs told one[22] of this:
From heaven down to earth,
From earth upward,
The water of the *Kaniya Sipî* has qualities to deal with so many[23] ills.

(25) My King is the all-powerful.
Four came from the Pearl of mystical knowledge:
Earth and Water and Wind and Fire.

(26) All four are precious.
By whom were they brought and by whom were they taken away?
By what (divine) command were they separated from the Pearl?

(27) All four are correct.
They neither ate nor slept.
By what (divine) command were they moved away from the Pearl?

Commentary

1 So PX, who evidently takes *kurr* as variant of Ar. *kull*.
2 PX: *mukurr*, *mukirr* (Ar. *muqirr*), "one who establishes, explains".
3 Lit. "the lover is a good knower".
4 So PX. The verb *sêwirîn* presumably derives from Ar. *ṣawwara*, "to shape, illustrate".
5 I.e., the visible manifestation of the faith?
6 Or "always holy men salute it". Lit. "always salutations are in it of the (holy) men.
7 So PX. Apparently from a verb *bîrîn*, "to have in mind".
8 So PX.
9 Lit. "keys and keys".
10 Lit. "soldiers", cf. below, T. 9, Comm. n: 1.
11 PX: *bora* is synonymous with *ji wî re*, "for him".
12 The translation assumes that *'ewil ko* has the same value as Ar. *awwala mā*.
13 I.e., ever since he was Lord over the world.
14 PX suggests that the feminine form *dosta dilê min* should be corrected to the masculine *dostê*. Since the significance of the phrase is not clear, no such alteration has been made in the text.
15 The word *ye* is here taken to represent the weaker form of the f. sg. relative pron. *ya*, cf. *(y)î* for *yê* in the same type of sentence.
16 Lit. "with you".

[17] So PX for *şiro kirin*. Cf. *şîrove*, "explanation" (Rizgar 1993: 178).
[18] The word *ye* is probably a weakened form of *yê*, cf. above, n. 15.
[19] So PX. Lit. "love were (pl.) seated together".
[20] For this interpretation of the form *didebirîn*, cf. Ar. *dabara*, "to pass (of time)", and Kurm. *debirandin*, "to carry out" (İzoli 1992: 109), i.e., "to make come to pass".
[21] The reference is to Sheykh Adi, who brought forth the *Kaniya Sipî*, cf. above, Ch. 4.
[22] Lit. "him". It is not clear to whom the pronoun refers.
[23] Lit. "how many".

6: Du'aya Sibeykê[1]

(1) amîn, amîn
tebarek el-dîn
ellah eḥsen el-xaliqîn
bi hîmeta Şemsedîn
Fexredîn, Secadîn
Nasirdîn, Babadîn
Şêşims qeweta dîn
Siltan Şêxadî tac el-ewelîn heta axirîn
ḥeqq ḥemd-illah ya rebb el-'alemîn
xêra bide, şerra wergerîn
mehderekê dixwazîn

(2) bi reḥma Şêxadî
rezay Melek[2] Şêx Sin
kerema Şêxşims

(3) nûr ji nûrê şifqî
sibḥane ji te xaliqî
meleke liber tifqî

(4) ji malê heta malê
Şêşims xudanê sîqalê
em li Şêxşims nabirrîn xiyalê

(5) ji derecê heta derecê
Şêxşims xudanê ferecê
em dê dest û damanêd Şêxşims ṭiwaf keyn
şûna[3] Ke'betullahê û ḥecê

(6) ji sitûnê heta sitûnê
Şêxşims xudanê me'rîfet û erkan û nasînê

(7) ji çavî heta devî
mora Şêxşims lê dikeve[4]
meydana mezna germe[5] nahêlin[6] binivî[7]

(8) serî heta pêya
ya Şêxşims, te neqşandîn danayne serêd rêya
em ji Şêxşims nabirrîn hîviya

6: The Morning Prayer

(1)[1] Amen, amen,
The blessing of the faith.
God is the best of Creators.
Through the miraculous power of Shems el-Dîn,
Fekhr el-Dîn, Sejadîn,
Naṣir el-Dîn and Babadîn,
Seykh Shems is the strength of the faith,
Sultan Sheykh Adi is the crown, from first to last.[2]
Truth, Praise be to God. Oh Lord of the Worlds,
Give good things, avert evil.
We long for a (moment of the) Presence.

(2) Through the mercy of Sheykh Adi,
The consent of Melek Sheykh Hesen,
The grace of Sheykh Shems.

(3)[3] Light (comes) from the light of dawn,
Praise to you, my Creator.
The angel is facing us.[4]

(4) From house to house,
Sheykh Shems is the lord of lustre (?),[5]
We shall not give up our thoughts of Sheykh Shems.[6]

(5) From stage to stage,
Sheykh Shems is the lord of the dawn.[7]
We shall kiss[8] the hand of Sheykh Shems and the hem of his clothes:
The place of God's Ka'ba and (the object of) pilgrimage.

(6) From pillar to pillar,
Sheykh Shems is the lord of mystical knowledge, of the pillars of the faith,[9] and of discernment.

(7) From eye to mouth,
The baptism of Sheykh Shems falls on one.
The Great Ones[10] are (actively) busy, they do not allow you to sleep.

(8) From head to feet,
Oh Sheykh Shems, you designed us and set us upon our paths.
We shall not turn our hopes away from Sheykh Shems.[11]

(9) ya Şêxşims tu li me vekey dergehê reḥmetê
te em îna bûyine ser vê xilmetê

(10) sunîk ku sunîne
zebûnin di-mandîne
me bi Şêşims hîvîne

(11) sunetik û sunete
zebûne kêm-taqete
me bi Şêşims eynete

(12) çî du'aya extiyarê mergehê kirî
cêşê Melek[8] Fexredîn, qewalê Şêxadî
du'a-qebûl Pîrê Libna
wan çî du'a kirî
me ew du'a kirî

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 27-9.
[2] Text: *melik.*
[3] Text: *şūta.* Correction by PX.
[4] Text: *dikevî.*
[5] Text: *germa.*
[6] Text: *nahêlîn.*
[7] Text: *binivî.*
[8] Text: *melik.*

(9) Oh Sheykh Shems, you open the doors of mercy for us,
You brought us to this (work of) service.

(10) A Yezidi, that is, the Yezidis[12]
Are weak and exhausted.
We have expectations of Sheykh Shems.

(11) A Yezidi, that is, the Yezidis
Are weak and of little endurance.
We have hopes[13] of Sheykh Shems.

(12) The prayers which the leaders of the sanctuary prayed,
The armies of Melek Fekhr el-Dîn, the Qewwals of Sheykh Adi,
Pîrê Libnan,[14] whose prayers are heard:
The prayers which they have prayed,
Those prayers we have prayed.

Commentary

1 The title of the prayer is that given by Silêman and Jindî 1979; on the lack of standard prayer texts in Yezidism see above, p. 70f. In Silêman and Jindî 1979 the first two verses are called the "first part" of the prayer, the rest of the text the "second part".

2 Lit. "Sheykh Adi is the first crown until the last".

3 This is the first verse of the "second part" of the prayer, cf. above, n. 1.

4 PX: *tifiq* "being face to face". Cf. Ar. Pers. *ṭafq*, "being near" (Steingass 1892: 816).

5 The word *ṣayqal* can have this meaning in Persian (Steingass 1892: 797). SW: "grace". EBS: probably "comfort". PX: "readiness to help".

6 Lit. "we shall not cut our imagination in Sheykh Shems".

7 For *ferec*, "dawn" see İzoli 1992: 151.

8 So PX. The original meaning of Ar. *ṭawäf*, "circumambulation", has led to a wide range of meanings in the speech of the Yezidis. See also above, Ch. 4.

9 This translation seems more appropriate in here than "cornerstones", cf. above, T. 1. 8, Comm. n. 15; 3. 12, Comm. n. 14.

10 So PX, who states that the word *mezne*, "great one, leader", is not to be confused with *mezin* "great".

11 Lit. "we shall not cut our hopes from Sheykh Shems".

12 The word *sunî* (or *sunnî*) originally meant "one who follows the Tradition, Sunnite", but it is regularly used in the *Qewls* to denote the members of the Yezidi community. The line means, lit. "a Sunnite, who are Sunnites".

13 So PX.

14 On this figure see above, Ch. 4, Appendix, s.v.

7: Du'aya Hêvarî[1]

(1) ya siwarê roj-hilatê, roj-avayê
hûn bidene[2] xatira dotê û dayê
hûn me xilas ken ji qedayê ji belayê ġelayê
hûn bidene xatira kaniya sipî 'eyn el-beyzayê
ya Şêşims tu ḥalê mala xo bipirsî û me jî[3] vê carê

(2) hûn bidene xatira 'erş[4] û kursî
gay û masî
ḥeyat, el-kursî
ya Şêşims tu li ḥalê mala xo û me jî pirsî

(3) hûn bidene xatira lewḥ û qeleme
Hawa û Ademe
'İsa bin Miryeme
Şêşims tu li ḥalê mala xo û me jî bipirsî li hemû deme

(4) hûn bidene xatira çerxan û feleke
horiyan û meleke
surra Ṭawusî Melek û çardeh ṭebeqe
ya Şêşims, tu pirsiyareke xêrê li mala xo û me jî bike

(5) hûn bidene xatira behiştê û darê
kafê û meġarê
surra Êzî û Beyt el-Farê
ya Şêşims tu pirsiyareke xêrê li mala xo û me jî bike vê carê

(6) hûn bi xatira durrê ken
kasê ken
extiyarê surr mexfî pê pira ṣelatê ken
ya Şêşims hûn pirseke mala xo û me jî biken

(7) hûn bidene xatira durra sipiye
melekê bêriye[5]
surra Êziye
ya Şêşims, li dîwana Siltan Şêxadî
tu bo mala xo û me jî bikey hîvîye

7: The Evening Prayer

(1) Oh you who ride both sunrise and sunset,[1]
Call[2] to mind the daughter and the mother!
Release us from destruction,[3] from disasters and from (times of) exorbitant prices.[4]
Call to mind the White Spring,[5]
Oh Sheykh Shems, investigate the state of your house,[6] and ours (state), at this time.

(2) Call to mind the Throne and the Seat,
The Bull and the Fish,[7]
Life (and) the Seat,
Oh Sheykh Shems, investigate the state of your house, and ours also.

(3) Call to mind the Tablet and the Pen,
Eve and Adam,
Jesus the son of Mary.
Sheykh Shems, investigate the state of your house, and ours also, at all times.

(4) Call to mind the revolving heavens and the firmament.
The Huris and the Angel,[8]
The Mystery of Melek Tawus and the fourteen spheres.[9]
Oh Sheykh Shems, ask questions beneficently[10] about your house, and also about us.

(5) Call to mind Paradise and the Tree,
The Cave and the Cavern,[11]
The Mystery of Êzîd, and Beyt Far,
Oh Sheykh Shems, ask questions beneficently about your house, and also about us, this time.

(6) Bring to mind the Pearl,
The Cup,
The 'Old Man' in whom the Mystery is hidden,[12] and the Selat Bridge.[13]
Oh Sheykh Shems, ask questions about your house, and also about us.

(7) Call to mind the White Pearl,
The pre-eternal[14] Angel,
The Mystery of Êzîd.
Oh Sheykh Shems, at the assembly of Sultan Sheykh Adi,
Give hope to your house, and also to us.

(8) hûn bidene xatira durra şore
Êzdîne Mîre
qublet el-bidore
ya Şêşims, bang û hawerêd[6] me bêt melekê jore

(9) hûn bidene xatira durra zere
ax û av û agire
'erd û 'ezman û bere
Êzdîne Mîr û her çar surre
ya Şêşims tu li bangîne mala xo û me jî were

(10) hûn bidene xatira sûka me'rîfetê
mêrê liber bedilê diket xilmetê
derwêşê şev û roj diket 'ibadetê
her pênj ferzêd heqîqetê
şêx û pîr, hosta û mirebbî, yar û birayêd axiretê
ya Şêşims tu meferiyeke mala xo û me jî bikey vê carê

(11) hûn bidene xatira du'ayêd fêran
rebenêd binê dêran
ya Şêşims tu li mala xo û me jî bikey sexbêran

(12) hûn bidene xatira kursiya reḥmana
melekî[7] cana
beḥra qudsî[8] cana
ya Şêşims me ji te divêt dîn û îmana

(13) hûn bidene xatira 'Izra'îl, Cibra'îl, Mîka'îl
Şifqa'îl, Dirda'îl, 'Izafîl, 'Izazîl
her heft melekêd kibîr, di destî da mifte û kelîl
ew jî liber ḥezreta melekê celîl

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 29-31.
2 The text has forms like *biden, ken,* rather than *bidin, kin,* throughout.
3 Text: *mejnī.*
4 Text: *'urş.*
5 So text.
6 Text: *hawirêd.*
7 So text.
8 So text.

(8) Call to mind the red[15] Pearl,
Êzdîna Mîr,[16]
The *qibla* of the full moons.[17]
Oh Sheykh Shems, may our shouts and cries for help come to the Angel on high.

(9) Call to mind the yellow Pearl,
Soil, Water, and Fire,
Earth, Heaven, and Stone,
Êzdîna Mîr and all Four Mysteries.[18]
Oh Sheykh Shems, do answer the cries for help[19] of your house, and ours also.

(10) Call to mind the Market of mystical Knowledge,[20]
The good man who serves when it is his turn (?),[21]
A derwish who performs acts of worship night and day.
All five obligations of Truth:
Sheykh and Pîr, Hosta and Mirebbî,[22] Friend and 'Brother[23] of the Hereafter'.
Oh Sheykh Shems, prepare a place of refuge for your house, and also for us, this time.

(11) Call to mind the prayers, full of significance,[24]
The monks in[25] the monasteries,
Oh Sheykh Shems, provide a solution[26] for your house, and for us also.

(12) Call to mind the Seat of the Merciful One,
The beloved Angel,
The beloved Sacred Ocean.
Oh Sheykh Shems, we desire Religion and Faith from you!

(13) Call to mind 'Izra'îl, Jibra'îl, Mika'îl
Shifqa'îl, Derda'îl, Izrafîl, 'Ezazîl;[27]
All seven Great Angels, in (whose) hands are the keys.[28]
They, in turn, are in the presence of the Glorious Angel.[29]

Commentary

1 I.e., Sheykh Shems. On the title of the text cf. above, T. 6, Comm. n. 1.
2 Here and in a number of other lines, the pl. pron. *hûn* is used, while the sg. *tu* occurs wherever Sheykh Shems is addressed by name. The plural may either be used as a mark of respect, or have the value of "you and the other angels".
3 Ar. *qaḍā'* "destruction, extermination".
4 So PX. Cf. Ar. *ġalā'*, "high price".
5 The words for "white spring" are repeated here, once in Kurdish and once in Arabic.
6 The reference may be either to the world generally, or to the family of Sheykh Shems, i.e., the Shemsani Sheykhs.

The line refers to a well-known creation myth, which plays a role in both the Yezidi and the Ahl-e Ḥaqq traditions. According to the myth, the earth was placed upon the horn of a bull which (either directly or with a stone in between) stood on the back of a fish. See with references above, Ch. 3.

[8] Or, assuming that original *meleka(n)* was shortened for the sake of the rhyme, "angels".

[9] I.e., of heaven and earth.

[10] Lit. "a question of goodness".

[11] On these holy places see above, Ch. 4.

[12] I.e., the Baba Sheykh, who is also known as *extiyarê mergehê*, "Old man of the Sanctuary", see above, Ch. 5.

[13] On this bridge see above, Ch. 4, with n. 74.

[14] So PX, who evidently understands the word as a variant of Standard Kurm. *berî*.

[15] On the association of the Pearl with colours see above, T. 1. 10, Comm. n. 18.

[16] On this figure see above, Ch. 2, and 4, Appendix.

[17] See above, Ch. 4, n. 78.

[18] I.e., the four sons of Êzdîna Mîr: Sheykh Shems, Fekhr el-Dîn, Sejadîn, and Naṣir el-Dîn.

[19] So PX.

[20] A location in Lalish, see above, Ch. 4.

[21] A guess.

[22] See above, Ch. 5.

[23] The word *yar*, "friend" is a synonym of *birayê axiretê*, "Brother of the Hereafter", see above, Ch. 5. The plural *ezafet* ending was probably adopted because of the juxtaposition of *yar* and *bira*, and does not indicate that there is more than one 'Brother'.

[24] See İzoli 1992: 152, s.v. *fêre*.

[25] Lit. "under".

[26] So Silêman and Jindî 1989: 204.

[27] Text: *'Izafîl, 'Izazîl*.

[28] Lit. "keys and keys".

[29] I.e., God (?).

8: Şehda Dînî[1]

(1) Şehda dînê min êk ellah
Melek[2] Şêx Sin ḥeqq ḥebîb ellah
meqlûb û mergeh ṣella

(2) ṣilavêd[3] mêra lilaşê meqlûbî
berî meye[4] cotêd qûba li wî 'erdî
'erdê êzîdxane ser dikêşîne[5] ber Şêxadî
'ebadetê sûcûdehê

(3) Siltan Şêxadî pedşê mine
Şêx Obekr[6] mewlayê mine
Siltan Êzî pedşê mine

(4) XX pîrê mine
YY mirebbiyê mine
Ṭawûsî Melek şehde[7] û êmanêd mine

(5) Kaniya Sipî mora mine
kaf û miġar û zimzim ḥeca mine
qublet el-bidor qubleta mine

(6) Melek[8] Şêx Sin baxoyê mine
Şêx XX xudanê mine
Şêx Şims mesebê mine
bînaya çavêd mine

(7) el-ḥemd lillah ji Adiya
vavartîn ji kafira rafidiya
em havêtîne ser pişka suniya

(8) minetkarîn ji mêra[9]
vavartîn ji kafira ji ġenzîra
em havêtîne ser pişka şêx û pîra

(9) minetkarîn ji minetê
vavartîn ji kafira ji şer'etê
havêtîne ser pişka şêxî sunetê

(10) heke xudê kir Êzdîne
ser navê Siltan Êzîne
el-ḥemd lillah em bi ol û terîqêd xo di-razîne

8: The Declaration of Faith[1]

(1) My declaration of Faith is: (there is) One God.
Melek Sheykh Hesen is Truth, (he is) the Friend of God.
(God) bless[2] Mount Meqlûb and the Sanctuary.

(2) Salutations to the holy men men, to Lalish[3] and to Meqlûb.
Our point of orientation[4] on this earth are the Twin Spires.[5]
The Yezidi nation turns towards Sheykh Adi,
In the worship of prostration.

(3) Sultan Sheykh Adi is my King,
Sheikh Obekr is my Lord,
Sultan Êzîd is my King.

(4) XX is my Pîr,[6]
XX is my Mirebbî,[7]
Melek Tawus is (the object of) my declaration and my faith.

(5) The *Kaniya Sipî* is my (the place of) baptism,
The Cave, the Cavern and the Zimzim spring are (the goals of) my pilgrimage.
The *qibla* of the full moons[8] is my *qibla*.

(6) Melek Sheykh Hesen is my ancestor,[9]
XX is my lord,[10]
Sheykh Shems is my religion,[11]
The light of my eyes.

(7) Praise be to God for the House of Adi,
We have remained separate from the heretics, the Rāfiḍites.
We have cast our lot with the people of the Tradition.[12]

(8) We are grateful to the holy men,
We have remained separate from the heretics, from the swine.
We have cast our lot with the Sheykhs and Pîrs.

(9) We are grateful and obliged,[13]
We have remained separate from the heretics, from the *Sharī'a*.[14]
We have cast our lot with the Sheykh of the Tradition.

(10) God willing, we are Yezidis,
Followers of the name of Sultan Êzîd.
Praise be to God, we are content with our religion and *ṭarīqa*.

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 35-6.
[2] Text: *melik.*
[3] So Text.
[4] Text: *birî mehê.*
[5] Text: *dikêşine.*
[6] Text: *Ubekir.*
[7] Text: *şehd.*
[8] Text: *melik.*
[9] Text: *mîra.*

Commentary

1 This is the title given in Silêman and Jindî 1979. For a slightly different version, referred to as the " Morning Prayer", see Anastase 1899: 313. A very similar prayer was published by Rudenko (1982: 131), as the "Hymn (to be recited) before Washing" (*qewlê berî şistinê*).

2 The translation assumes that *şella* here represents the Muslim formula *şallā 'llahu 'alayhi wa sallama* (so PX).

3 So PX for *lilaş*.

4 A somewhat free translation of the emended reading *berî meye* (lit. "before us is", but cf. such expressions as *berê xwe dan*, "to turn towards, take as one's direction"). PX calls the line incomprehensible.

5 Lit. "the pair of spires", i.e., the two major spires of the Sanctuary of Sheykh Adi. See also above, Ch. 4.

6 Here each Yezidi mentions his or her own Pîr.

7 On the Mirebbî see above, Ch. 5, s.v.

8 See above, Ch. 4 and Text 7.

9 PX: "grandfather".

10 Here every Yezidi mentions his own Sheykh (Silêman and Jindî 1979: 35, n. 23).

11 I.e., my allegiance is to him. Cf. the well-known religious song beginning *Şerfedînê dînê mine*, "Sheref el-Dîn is my religion".

12 I.e., originally, the Sunnites, cf. above, T. 1. 7, Comm. n. 12.

13 Lit. "we are indebted to the obligation".

14 The aversion to the *Sharī'a* (cf. below, T. 14. 14), combined with the claim of being 'Sunnites', may reflect the attitudes of the early followers of Sheykh Adi.

9: Beyta Cindî[1]

(1) cindiyo rabe roje
bes vê xewê hindoje
xewa berê sibê zor 'edab û doje

(2) cindiyo rabe rabe
bes bi vê xewê tu şa be
xewa berê sibê zor 'ezabe

(3) rabe ji xewêd şirîne
bes gorê teng bibîne
feqîr di-bê-kerbin, di-bê-kîne

(4) rabe ji xewêd ṭariye
xew ḥeram dibû li cindiye
wê li xudanêd maşan û cenbeqiye

(5) rabe ji xewêd sibehe
xew ḥeram dibû li medehe
wê li xudanêd xerqehe

(6) rabe xewêd hingora
xew ḥeram dibû li zora
wê li xudanêd xerqêd bi mora

(7) rabe ji xewêd hêvara
xew ḥeram dibû li mêrdara
wê li xudanêd kewnan û kara

(8) rabe ji xewêd merxûna
xew ḥeram dibû li zergûna
wê li xudanêd danan û stûna

(9) malo nîveka şevêye
dengekê 'elî wê têye

(10) here te debore ji pêye
maşê te maşêki çêye
wê li ber xilmeta mewlêye

9: The Song of the Commoner[1]

(1) Oh commoner, get up, it is day!
Enough, throw off (?)[2] this sleep,
Sleeping (until just) before morning (leads to) severe punishment and hell.

(2) Oh commoner, get up, get up!
Enough, be content with this (much) sleep,
Sleeping (until just) before morning (leads to) severe punishment.

(3) Get up from sweet sleep!
Enough, look at this narrow grave.[3]
The Feqîrs are without anguish, without anger.

(4) Get up from dark sleep!
Sleep is now unlawful for commoners.
Oh you men with a livelihood and payments[4] (to take care of).

(5) Get up from sleep in the morning!
Sleep is now unlawful because of (the obligation to give) praise.
Oh you men wearing the *khirqe*.

(6) Get up from the sleep of early dawn![5]
Sleep is now unlawful for many (?)[6]
Oh you men wearing *khirqes* that have been 'baptised'.[7]

(7) Get up from the sleep of evenings!
Sleep is now unlawful for good men,[8]
Oh you men with busy lives.[9]

(8) Get up from ... sleep![10]
Sleep is now unlawful for discerning[11] people,
Oh you men of ...[12]

(9) My dear, in the middle of the night.
A voice from on high is[13] coming.

(10) Come, your job is waiting for you (?).[14]
Your livelihood is a good one,
It is in the service of the Lord.

(11) malo dikel wê dixûnin
van şeva xew lê nînin
cindî holê disitînin

(12) cindî naken nû xewê
dê bi serê xo çine gewê
digel mîrê xo naken derewê

(13) dîkelê perrê wî sipiye
wê dixûnet li 'erşê 'êliye
wê liber melkê bêriye
bang û hawarêd me ji diwana şêxadiye

(14) dîkilê perrê wî sore
wê dixûnit li 'erşê jore
wê liber melkê bi more
bang u hawarêd me ji diwana qublet bidore

(15) dîkilê perrê wê zere
wê dixûnit li 'erşê di sere
wê liber melkê ekbere
bang û hawarêd me ji Şêşimsê tetere

(16) dîkilê perrê wî keske
tû vê xewê bes ke
rabe ji Şêxadî bixwaze maş û berat û rizqe

(17) dîkilê 'erşa bang da
ê 'erda cewab da
Şêxadî wê di Hekar da
Padşê min wê di dilê bi-reḥm da

(18) dîkilê koke koke
wê dixûnit li me'şûqe
wê liber melkê foqe
êle biramo li diwana Şêxadî kiribû şewqe

(19) dîkilê perrê wî bi renge
ji 'erşa têtin denge
haway şara têne cenge

(11) My dear, the cockerels call you.
These nights are not for sleeping.
The commoners go out into the world.[15]

(12) Commoners do not go to sleep again.
They will go to confront the harsh world head-on.[16]
They do not tell lies to their master.[17]

(13) The cockerel, its feathers are white.
It is calling from the High Throne,
It is with the pre-eternal Angel.
Our shouts and cries for help are directed to the assembly of Sheykh Adi.

(14) The cockerel, its feathers are red.
It is calling from the throne below,
It is with the Angel who presides over baptism.
Our shouts and cries for help are directed to the assembly of the *qibla* of the full moons.

(15) The cockerel, its feathers are yellow.
It is calling from the throne on high,
It is with the Greatest Angel.
Our shouts and cries for help are directed to Sheykh Shems the Tartar.[18]

(16) The cockerel, its feathers are green.
Do end this sleep!
Get up and ask Sheykh Adi for a livelihood, for *berat*,[19] and for sustenance.

(17) The cockerel of the Throne has crowed,
The one on earth has answered.
Sheykh Adi is in Hakkâri,
My King is in the merciful heart.

(18) The cockerel, crowing,
Is calling to the beloved.
It faces the Angel above.
Oh my brother, it has made a light[20] in the assembly of Sheykh Adi.

(19) The cockerel, its feathers are many-coloured.
A voice comes from the Throne,[21]
All who are awake[22] are preparing themselves for war![23]

(20) malo feqîr di-zergûnin
mîrê xo bi çava nabînin
maşê xo ji mîrê mezin distûnin

(21) cindiyo rabe roje
feqîr çone ber roje
bi xunav keftî peykan û bişkojan û xerqehe

(22) rabe ji xewê sibehe
feqîr çone ber dergehe
bi xunav keftî peykan û bişkoja û xerqehe

(23) rabe ji tarî bave
qesd bike merzêd ave
ciwan bike destan û çave
eva bû 'eddetê me zirbave

(24) cindiyo tuy nivistî
li xilmetêy sistî
lew mîrê mezin tu ji maş êxistî

(25) ne xwastim lew nivistim
heke bixwastame nedinivistim
lew mîrê mezin ez ji maş êxistim

(26) cindiyo mexo rojê
u menive bi şevê
herro ku roj hiltê
te maşê xo ji mîrê mezin divê

(27) cindiyo mexo rojan
u menive bi şevan
serî hilîne bibîne milkan û baġan
behişta baqî milkê siltan Êzî 'eleyhe 'l-selam

(28) cindiyo tuy şufîq
me şerab divêt ji kasêd 'emîq
liwê ḥewdê yele bramo milkê Ebabekr el-ṣedîq

(20) My dear, the Feqîrs are clever,
They do not see their master with their eyes.
They receive their livelihood from the great Master.

(21) Oh commoner, get up, it is day!
The Feqîrs have gone to face the sun.[24]
The fronts of their *khirqes*, their buttons[25] and their *khirqes* have become wet with dew.

(22) Get up from sleep in the morning!
The Feqîrs have gone to the Doorway[26]
The front parts of their *khirqes*, their buttons[27] and their *khirqes* have become wet with dew.

(23) Get up from darkness, friend (?).[28]
Head for the streams of water,
Cleanse your hands and eyes.
Such has (always) been our custom, comrade (?).

(24) Oh commoner, you were asleep.
You are slack in your service,
That is why the great Master has dismissed you from your job.

(25) I was not willing, that is why I slept.
Had I been willing, I would not have slept,
That is why the great Master has dismissed me from my job.

(26) Oh commoner, do not eat by day,
And do not sleep by night.
Each day when the sun comes up,
You shall receive your livelihood[29] from the great Master.

(27) Oh commoner, do not eat in the daytime,
And do not sleep at night.
Lift up your head, loook at the properties and gardens (above):
Eternal Paradise is the realm of Sultan Êzîd, peace be upon him.

(28) Oh commoner, you are kind,
We need wine from the deep cups.
Come on, brother, (let us go) to this pond, the property of Ebû Bekr the Righteous.[30]

(29) cindiyo tuy cindî
me şerab divê ji kasêd qewî
liwê ḥewdê yele bramo milkê 'Emer û 'Elî

(30) cindiyo tuy rêber
me şerab divêt ji kasêd zer
liwê ḥewdê yele bramo milkê 'Elî û 'Emer

(31) cindiyo tuy rênas
me şerab divêt ji kasêd xas
liwê ḥewdê yele bramo milkê Xidruliyas

(32) cindiyo tuy nûrîn
me şerab divêt ji kasêd zerguîn
liwê ḥewdê yele bramo milkê Şimsedîn û Fexredîn

(33) dilê minî bi kovane
Pîrê bi navê Libnane
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surra Şêx Mendê Fexrano

(34) kofê teyî qewiye
lê cema dibûn weliye
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surra Şêxê Adiye

(35) kofê teyî bi cî de
lê cema dibûn mirîde
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surra Siltanê Êzîde

(36) *kofê[2] teyî mezine
lê cema dibûn momine
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surra Melek[3] Şêx Sine

(37) kofê te bukir
li dinê bûye dhikir
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surra Şêxu Bekir

(29) Oh commoner, you are a commoner,
We need wine from the strong cups.
Come on, brother, (let us go) to this pond, the property of 'Umer and 'Elî.

(30) Oh commoner, you are the guide,
We need wine from the yellow cups.
Come on, brother, (let us go) to this pond, the property of 'Elî and 'Umer.

(31) Oh commoner, you are the one who knows the way,
We need wine from special cups.
Come on, brother, (let us go) to this pond, the property of Khidr-Ilyas.

(32) Oh commoner, you are enlightened,
We need wine from the discerning cups.
Come on, brother, (let us go) to this pond, the property of Shems el-Dîn and Fekhr el-Dîn.

(33)[31] My heart is full of grief,
The Pîr whose name is (Pîrê) Libnan.
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
The ornament of the Mystery of Sheykh Mend, the son of Fekhr.

(34) Your headdress is strong,[32]
The saints have gathered around it.
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
The ornament of the Mystery of Sheykh Adi.

(35) You headdress is in place,
The Mirîds have gathered around it.
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
The ornament of the Mystery of Sultan Êzîd.

(36) Your headdress (?)[33] is great,
The believers have gathered around it.
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
The ornament of the Mystery of Melek Sheykh Hesen.

(37) Your headdress is pristine,
It has come to be commemorated in the world.
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
The ornament of the Mystery of Sheykh Obekr.

(38) kofê teyî nûrîne
lê cema dibûn zergûne
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surr(a) Şemsedîn u Fexredîne

(39) kofê teyî bi tertîfe
mêra jê dibir neṣîbete
Pîrê Libnano, Xidr-Ilyas bixo neqîbe

(40) kofê teyî girane
firrî, çû, buwe 'ezmane
li 'erşan dewran dane

(41) Mîr Sicayê Sicane
Nasirdînê Babane
Şêr Meḥmed Reşane
Pîrê Tercimane
Dawûdê bin Dermane
rastî sipartî gyane
Mîr Heselmemane
serwerê me her çilane
Pîrê Libnano gyano
zeynet bi surra Şêx Mendê Fexrane

(42) çûme diyarî wê nûrê
kela te wê dixurê
Pîrê Libnano gyano
wê li ḥewşê wê li şûrê

(43) çûme diyarî behiştê
ew dîndara min xoş tê
cindî mîr bû, libisê reş lê

(44) çûme Banê Kafê-yo
me dît merzêd beḥrê-yo
Pîrê Libnano gyano
kasê wa li ber gezirê-yo

(45) çûme silavgehê
ferecê[4] me li qubehê
Pîrê Libnano gyano

(38) Your headdress is luminous,
The discerning ones have gathered around it.
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
The ornament of the Mystery of Shems el-Dîn and Fekhr el-Dîn.

(39) Your headdress is in order,
The good men have taken their share of it.
Oh Pîrê Libnan, Khidr-Ilyas himself is (your) *neqîb*.[34]

(40) Your headdress is precious,
It flew, it went away, it was in Heaven,
It circled around the Throne.

(41) Mîr Seja of Seja,[35]
Naṣir al-Dîn of Baban,
The Lion Meḥmed Reshan,
The Pîr who is the Translator,[36]
Dawûd the son of Derman,
Have truly surrendered their souls.
Mîr Ḥesen Meman
Is the leader of all forty of us.[37]
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan
The ornament of the Mystery of Sheykh Mend of Fekhr.

(42) I went towards[38] that light.
One cries out in deep emotion.[39]
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
Oh the forecourt,[40] oh the surrounding wall.[41]

(43) I went towards heaven.
That sight[42] pleases me,
The Commoner had become a Prince, dressed in black.

(44) I went on the Roof of the Cave.[43]
We saw the streams of the ocean.[44]
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan,
Their cups stood on the *gezir*.[45]

(45) I went to the *Silavgeh*,[46]
Our joy is in the Spires,
Oh beloved Pîrê Libnan.

(46) li cihê mayî li binê mayî[5]
dê bi Siltan Şêxadî keyn 'ibadetê û sucûdehê
em di-kêmin, Xudêyî temame

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 64- 9.
[2] Text: *lomê.*
[3] Text: *melik.*
[4] Text: *fercî.*
[5] Text: *li cihê mayê li binî mayê.*

(46) At the eternal place, at the eternal foundation,[47]
We shall perfom worship and prostrations for Sultan Sheykh Adi.
We are deficient, God is perfect.[48]

Notes

1 PX: a *beyt* is a text about the duties of the community, whereas a *qewl* is directly concerned with matters of religion. No confirmation could be found. The translation "commoner" for *Jindî* has been adopted for want of a better English equivalent. The original meaning of the word is "soldier", but it is widely used for ordinary, hard-working people of no particular distinction (PX). This *beyt* is very well known among Yezidis. As in the case of the *Qewls*, the sacred instruments, *def* and *shibab*, are played when it is recited (Silêman and Jindî 1989: 63).
2 Kurm. *hindoje* could come from a verb **hindotin* "to throw off", cf. NP. *andāxtan*, "id.".
3 I.e., the world.
4 PX: *cenbeqî* "payment, recompense, especially for derwishes".
5 For *hengore*, "darkness" see Zero 1987: 108. M, verbally, October 1992: "late evening, darkness". Izoli (1992: 203): *hingurê sibê* "dawn".
6 Or perhaps "strictly".
7 I.e., immersed in the water of the *Kaniya Sipî*, cf. above, Ch. 6 and T. 3. 15.
8 So PX for *mêrdara*.
9 PX: *yê kewn û kar* "one who has a busy, full life".
10 The word *merxun* was unfamiliar to all my informants.
11 So PX.
12 The apparent meaning of *danan û stûna* is "gifts and pillars". It would be tempting to connect the words with *dan u stitandin*, "giving and taking, commerce", but no confirmation could be found.
13 In this dialect, the particle *wê* is apparently used with the indicative to strengthen the continuous or descriptive sense of the verb.
14 Cf. *ji pê*, "standing up" (Rizgar 1993: 104).
15 PX: lit. "take their polo-sticks". But cf. İzoli 1992: 205: *hol*, "square, playing field".
16 So PX. Lit. "They will go with their heads to (meet) a wooden ball (*go*)".
17 Or "Prince".
18 See also above, Ch. 4, Appendix, and T. 3. 4.
19 I.e., the little balls of earth from the Sanctuary which are regarded as holy, see above, Ch. 4.
20 For this meaning of *şewq* see İzoli 1992: 398; Rizgar 1993: 177.
21 Lit. "thrones".
22 PX: *haway* "all"; *şar* is a variant of *hişyar*.
23 I.e., for active duty.
24 I.e., presumably, in prayer.
25 The anomalous pl. obl. ending of *bişkojan* is probably the result of the word's juxtaposition to *paykan*.
26 I.e., the *Derî Mîr* "the doorway of the Prince" at the Sanctuary, where the Feqîrs stand when they pray in the mornings (PX). On this doorway see above, Ch. 4 with n. 98.
27 The anomalous pl. obl. ending of *bişkojan* is probably the result of the word's juxtaposition to *paykan*.
28 The translation assumes that the words *bave* and *zirbave* represent vocatives whose final vowel has been reduced to *-e* because of the rhyme. The translations "friend" and "comrade", seem more suitable in the context than "father" and "stepfather".
29 Lit. "your livelihood is owed to you", or "you want your livelihood".

[30] I.e., let us drink from the pond of wisdom which belongs to Ebû Bekr (PX).

[31] According to one of Silêman and Jindî's informants, the text from here on constitutes a separate *Qewl*, the "Hymn of the Headdress", which is normally recited together with the "Song of the Commoner" (Silêman and Jindî 1979: 67, n. 38). On Pîrê Libnan see above, Ch. 4, Appendix, s.v.

[32] So PX. Rhyme is clearly more important here than sense.

[33] Silêman and Jindî (1979: 68) have *lomê te* in this one place. The usual meaning of *lom*, "blame" (Izoli 1992: 260), would not yield good sense. It seems unlikely, moreover, especially in an orally transmitted text, that in a series of parallel verses all beginning with the same words, one verse would differ from the others in this respect.

[34] The word *neqîb*, which in Persian can mean either "chief, leader", or "personal servant", is often used in connection with Khidr-Ilyas (see above, Ch. 4, Appendix, s.v.). In Yezidi usage the word can also denote a member of the entourage of the Qewwals when they travel with the image of Melek Tawus (Sileman 1985: 35).

[35] I.è., Sejadin.

[36] I.e., he translated for Sheykh Adi, who spoke no Kurdish (PX).

[37] I.e., of the *Chil Mêran* or "Forty Saints", see Ch. 4, Appendix, s.v.

[38] So PX.

[39] Lit. "your deep emotion are crying out" (PX).

[40] Ar. *ḥawš*, "walled precinct, courtyard".

[41] So PX. The passage refers to the Sanctuary of Sheykh Adi. For the meaning of *şûre* cf. İzoli 1992: 405, who gives "railing, moat". The word apparently denotes something which surrounds a building or group of buildings.

[42] So PX. The word *dîndar* (rather than the expected *dîdar*) is used in the same sense in the versions of *Qewlê Şêx Obekr* published in O. and J. Jelîl 1978: 11 (IV); 16 (VI), *et passim*.

[43] I.e., the part of the roof of the Sanctuary which is located over the Cave (see above, Ch. 4). The Yezidi 'men of Religion' often go there (PX).

[44] PX states that the image refers to the streams of pilgrims coming up to the Sanctuary.

[45] I.e., a special kind of firewood, which may only be handled by people qualified to do so (PX). The implication seems to be that all pilgrims had reached such exceptional status.

[46] See above, Ch. 4.

[47] Both PX and C thought that these words referred to actual places in the Lalish valley, although they could only speculate as to the identity of these sites.

[48] This sentence frequently marks the end of hymns.

10: Qewlê Ṭawûsî Melek[1]

(1) ya rebbî 'ela şanek û 'ela mekanek û 'ela sultanek
ya rebbî tuyî kerîmî tuyî reḥîmî
ya rebbî her tu xuday
her tuyî la'îqî medḥ û senay

(2) ya rebbî tu melekê melikê cîhanî
ya rebbî tu melekê melikê kerîmî
tu melekê 'erşê 'ezîmî
ya rebbî ji 'enzel da her tuyî qedîmî

(3) tu tam û kam û ray
ya rebbî her tu xuday
her tu hay
û her tuyî layîqî medḥ û senay

(4) ya rebbî tu melekê 'ins û jinsî
ya rebbî tu melekê 'erş û kursî
ya rebbî tu melekê gay û masî
ya rebbî tu melekê 'alem û qudsî

(5) tu el-semedî li fitîlê[2] mayî
tu el[3]-semedî ḥey el-mecîdî
wahidî ferz el-ḥemîdî

(6) ya rebbî tu xudawendê sepehrî[4]
ye rebbî tu xudanê meh û mehrî[5]

(7) ya rebbî tu xudawendê 'etay
ya rebbî tu la'îqî medḥ û senay

(8) ya rebbî ji êsma tuyî bilindî
*te ne çone,[6] tuy çendî
*nazêyî nezayî tu zendî[7]

(9) miqadestê dû payî
tuyî layîqî medḥ û senay

(10) ya rebbî te kerem daye[8] ḥûtî
min daye[9] qûtî
ḥelîmî melkûtî

10: The Hymn Of Melek Tawus[1]

(1) Oh my Lord, by [2] your eminence, by your rank and by your sovereignty,
Oh my Lord, you are generous, you are merciful,
Oh my Lord, you are forever God,
You are forever worthy of praise and homage.

(2) Oh my Lord, you are the angel who is the king of the world,
Oh my Lord, you are the angel who is a generous king,
You are the angel of the awesome Throne.
Oh my Lord, from pre-eternity you have always been the ancient one.

(3) You are taste, happiness and insight,
Oh my Lord, you are forever God,
You are forever aware,
And you are forever worthy of praise and homage.

(4) Oh my Lord, you are the angel of men and jinns,
Oh my Lord, you are the angel of the Throne and the Seat,[3]
Oh my Lord, you are the angel of the Bull and the Fish,[4]
Oh my Lord, you are the angel of the world and what is holy.

(5) You are the eternal one, you dwelt in the source of light,[5]
You are the eternal one, you are the living one, the glorious.
You are one, praise is due to you.

(6) Oh my Lord, you are the master of the firmament,
Oh my Lord, you are the master of the moon and the sun.

(7) Oh my Lord, you are the master of gifts,
Oh my Lord, you are worthy of praise and homage.

(8) Oh my Lord, you are higher than the sky,
You have no attributes,[6] you are everywhere,
You do not give birth, you are alive without having been born.[7]

(9) .....(?)[8] the hand and two feet,
You are worthy of praise and homage.

(10) Oh my Lord, you bestowed grace on the whale,
To me you gave sustenance,
Oh my Lord, you are the gentle one, you are the heavenly power.

(11) ya rebbî tu 'alimê 'ulimay
ya rebbî tu hem ḥekîmî û hem mecalî

(12) ya rebbî te ne xafe te ne xwerde
xudan malî xudan perde
ya rebbî mekanê te wê li hemû 'erde

(13) ya rebbî te ne *lewne[10] te ne renge,
te ne awaze, te ne denge
te ne îndame, te ne çenge
ya rebbî kes nizanit tuy kusay

(14) ya rebbî tu weliyê ferza-nimêjî
ruḥa diperêjî
ji milan melekan *di-pîjin[11]
ya rebbî tu ḥakimê şah û geday

(15) ya rebbî tu ḥakimê cimletî[12] 'alem
ya rebbî te tobe danabû li ser adem
ya rebbî tu ḥakimê şîfayetê

(16) ya rebbî tu reḥmî keremî emînî
ya rebbî tuyî el-semedî, em çû nînîn

(17) ya rebbî ezî ketîmey tawîme
tu hem dermanî û hem deway
tu hem dermanî û hem tebîbî

(18) tu ḥekîmî em ġerîbîn
ye rebbî her tu dizanî dermanê me bikû dibe[13]
ya rebbî tu ûnsê ġurbayî

(19) û li sûç[14] û guneh û mişewşe
me kirin teḥiyat û gewşe
ya rebbî li me *bibexşe[15]

(20) ya rebbî her tuyî hay
û her tu xuday
û her tuyî layîqî medḥ û senay

(21) ya rebbî tu xaliqî em muxliqîn
tu mirazî em daxwazîn

(11) Oh my Lord, you are the most learned of the learned,
Oh my Lord, you are both the wise one and the strength.

(12) Oh my Lord, you have neither sleep nor food,
You are (like) a householder, you observe the proprieties,[9]
Oh my Lord, your place is all over the world.

(13) Oh my Lord, you have neither colour[10] nor hue,
You have neither sound nor voice,
You have neither limb nor arm,
Oh my Lord, no one knows in what way you exist.

(14) Oh my Lord, you are a holy being to whom prayer is due,
You guard the souls,
An angel stands on either side of you,[11]
Oh my Lord, you are the judge of king and beggar.

(15) Oh my Lord, you are the judge of the entire world,
Oh my Lord, you imposed repentance on man,
Oh my Lord, you are the judge of intercession.[12]

(16) Oh my Lord, you are merciful, generous and faithful,
Oh my Lord, you are the eternal one, we are nothing.

(17) Oh my Lord, I am fallen and feverish,
You are both remedy and medicine,
You are both remedy and healer.

(18) You are wise, we are aliens,
Oh my Lord, you always know where our remedy is,
Oh my Lord, you are an intimate friend to strangers.[13]

(19) And in error and sin, confused,
We have presented our salutations and prayers.
Oh my Lord, please forgive us.

(20) Oh my Lord, you are always aware,
And you are always God,
And you are always worthy of praise and homage.

(21) Oh my Lord, you are the creator, we are creatures,
You are the desired, we are the desire.

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 24-6.
2 Text: *lifitî lemayî*.
3 Text: *lil*.
4 Text: *seperî*.
5 Text: *merî*.
6 Text: *te nav li çu nine*. Emendation on the basis of Bedirkhan 1933.
7 Conjectural emendation. Text: *mizê zay dû zendî*.
8 Text: *tu kerem dayê*.
9 Text: *dayê*.
10 Text: *lewme*.
11 Text: *milkan dibêjî*.
12 So Text.
13 Text: *dibî*.
14 Text: *suc*.
15 Text: *ne bexşe*. The emendation was approved by PX.

Commentary

1 This is the title of the text as given in Silêman and Jindî 1979. The fact that no overt mention is made of Melek Tawus may be attributed to the fact that the mention of the name is discouraged, see above, Ch. 4, Appendix under "Melek Tawus". A similar text was published by Bedirkhan (1933), under the title *Nivêja Sipîde'î*, "Early Morning Prayer".

2 Or "for". Cf. Bedirkhan 1933: *xudayo jibona şanê te, şona te, jibona padşa heybete*. However, the latter passage could represent a conscious attempt to 'Kurdicise' the text by substituting *jibona*, "for", for Ar. *'alā*,"by, because of".

3 See above, T. 7. 2.

4 See above, T. 7. 2.

5 Lit."wick", cf. above, T. 4. 13, 14.

6 Lit. "you have no how".

7 Note that this line is an emendation.

8 PX suggests reading *miqayê dest u dû payî*, "you take care of the hand and two feet", and cites an expression *muqayetî bêt*, "be careful". No confirmation could, however, be found.

9 So PX. The expression *xudanê perde* means, lit. "lord of the curtain", i.e., one who makes his womenfolk observe the proprieties (cf. 'purdah').

10 The emendation to *lewne* seems to be corroborated by the juxtaposition of similar terms in the following verses. Note, however, that Bedirkhan (1933) also has *lome*, "blame".

11 So PX, who states that the passage refers to the "two angels" (Ar. *malakān*) who play a role in the judgment of the soul. For the expression *pîj bûn*, "to stand erect", see Rizgar 1993: 148.

12 The line is presumably intended as a request for leniency.

13 An approximate rendering of *uns*, "intimacy".

11: Qewlê Melek Şêx Sin[1]

(1) silav û sed silav
hey Meleko şirîn-kelav
ya Melek Şêx Sin ko baxo Şêfexrê Adiya ez bim ġulam

(2) silavêd me li Melek Şêx Sine
hey mêrdaroy mezine
ya Melek Şêx Sin ji heybeta te dimirin dijmine

(3) şêxê mino ji Adiya
rêbero ber suniya
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu wê li dereca zor hîviya

(4) şêxê mino ji Lalişê
ji qewlê te xilas bûn xişê
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu baxo Şêfexrê Adiya
ez beniyêk ji beniya bi te dijê

(5) şêxê mino temam
ji giriya te digrît şerq hetanî Şam
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu baxo Şêfexrê Adiya ez ġulam

(6) tu beḥrî ez rûme
tu kanî ez come
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu li pay ez li kome

(7) tu beḥrî ez kanîme
tu kelehî ez holîme[2]
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu li dehr ez li kuîme

(8) tu beḥrî ez şîv
tu zêrî ez zîv
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu rojî ez heyv

(9) tu şemsî ez qemerim
tu xundkarî ez babzerim
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu 'alimî ez defterim

11: The Hymn of Melek Sheykh Hesen

(1) Greetings, a hundred greetings,
Oh Angel of sweet words,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, ancestor[1] of Sheykh Fekhr of the house of Adi, let me be your slave.

(2) Our greetings to Melek Sheykh Hesen,
Oh great commander,[2]
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, foes die in awe of your majesty.

(3) Oh my Sheykh of the house of Adi,
Oh guide for those who follow the Tradition,[3]
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are in a position to inspire much hope.[4]

(4) Oh my Sheykh from Lalish,
Your speech is free of idle words (?),[5]
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the ancestor of Sheykh Fekhr of the house of Adi,
I am one slave of many, ...[6] with you.

(5) Oh my perfect Sheykh,
(The lands) from West to East are weeping because you weep.
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the ancestor of Sheykh Fekhr of the house of Adi, I am a slave.

(6) You are the ocean, I am the surface,
You are the spring, I am the stream,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are in a high position, I am in a low one.[7]

(7) You are the ocean, I am a spring,
You are a castle, I am a hut,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are (present) in this world, where am I?

(8) You are an ocean, I am a *wadi*,[8]
You are gold, I am silver,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the sun, I am the moon.

(9) You are the sun, I am the moon
You are learned, I am (just) a respectable man
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the scholar, I am the notebook.

(10) tu 'alimî ez rêzan
tu siwarî ez çogan
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu goykerî ez medan

(11) tu elfî ez rome
tu siwarî ez kaşome
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu ferzî ez sunetim

(12) tu elfî ez bême
tu bajêrî ez rême
ya Melek Şêx Sin nav û karêd te di-me'nêne

(13) tu bajêrî ez sûq
tu miftehî ez sindûk
ya Melek Şêx Sin tuy mezinî ezî piçûk

(14) tu babî ez pisim
tu Mekehî ez Qudsim
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu mîrî ez meclisim

(15) tu mîrî ez heval
li min tacirî ez delal
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu sûkî ez sewal

(16) tu xinê ezî dirroj
tu melhemî[3] ezî rêj
ya Melek Şêx Sin ji[4] nav û karêd te[5] dibim hawêj

(17) zêwe tu Lalişî
Mekehê tu berê reşî
ya Melek Şêx Sin li maldara tu maltijî

(18) tu hostayî ez kitêb
bixûne heke tê heye 'êb
ya Melek Şêx Sin çêkirin ba te ne 'ecêb

(19) bixûne seransere
heke 'êbek tê hate dere
ya Melek Şêx Sin çêkirin ba te fere

(10) You are the scholar, I am the student,
You are the horseman, I am the playing stick,[9]
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the player, I am the field.

(11) You are the alpha, I am (somewhere) in the middle (?),[10]
You are the horseman, I am the polo-stick,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are an obligation, I am (only) customary.[11]

(12) You are the alpha, I am the beta,
You are the city, I am the road,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, your fame and works are full of meaning.

(13) You are the city, I am the market,
You are the key, I am the box,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are great, I am small.

(14) You are the father, I am the son
You are Mecca, I am Jerusalem
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the prince, I am the assembly.

(15) You are the prince, I am a companion,
You are the merchant,[12] I am the broker,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the supply, the demand is mine.[13]

(16) You are blood, I am dried blood,[14]
You are the bandage, I am the pus,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, I become ecstatic[15] (when thinking of) your fame and works.

(17) Of the (holy) land[16] you are Lalish,
Of Mecca you are the Black Stone,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, among rich ones you are one whose house is full.

(18) You are the teacher, I am the book,
Read (the book, to see) if there is a fault in it.
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, making perfect is not a miracle for you.

(19) Read all of it:
If a fault has come into it,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, making perfect it is obligatory for you.

(20) tu hostayî ez binyat
tu xetîbî ez civat
ya Melek Şêx Sin tu el-ḥemdî ez teḥiyat

(21) tu 'alimî ez 'emelim
tu mêvanî ez mezelim
ya Melek Şêx Sin li nav û di karê tey kamilim

(22) ji kesa ma tu kesî
ji weliya ma tu pisî
ya Melek Şêx Sin hem tu rûḥî hem tu nefesî

(23) ji nefsa tu surrî
ji horiya tu ḥurrî
ji ṣedefa tu durrî

(24) ji durra tu ṣedefî
ji Qurana tu elifî
ya Melek Şêx Sin ji sunda tu bo me meṣḥefî

(25) ji desta emînî
Qur'ana tu yasînî
beḥrêd giran dimeyînî

(26) tu bo me meseb û dînî
ya Melek Şêx Sin xozma wê ruḥê tu bidey û jê nestînî
bi zor dereca gehînî

(27) ṣeḥî tu Melek Şêx Sinî
mêrdarekî mezinî
bînaya çavê minî
sunet navê Şêxadî Melek Şêx Sin sekinî

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 123-6. Sheykh Hesen's epithet is given as *melik* throughout that text. Silêman and Jindî's text has a number of small mistakes and oversights. Where there is no doubt about the original version these have been corrected without reference in the notes.
[2] Text: *'olîme*. Correction by PX.
[3] Text: *melḥem*.
[4] Text: om. Correction by PX.
[5] Text adds *zikriya te*, in parentheses.

(20) You are the master-builder, I am the building,
You are the preacher, I am the congregation,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are the first line of Scripture,[17] I am the benedictions.

(21) You are the scholar, I am (the man of) action,
You are the guest, I am the house,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, I know all about your fame and actions.

(22) Are you a person among persons?
Are you a son among saints?[18]
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, you are both the soul and the breath.

(23) Of the spirits you are the Mystery,
Of the houris you are the noble one,
Of the oysters you are the pearl.

(24) Of pearls you are the oyster,
Of the Qur'ān you are the first letter,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, as to oaths, for us you are the Book (we swear by).

(25) You are safe from the hands (of attackers),
Of the Qur'an you are the *Yāsīn*,[19]
You cause deep[20] oceans to become solid.

(26) You are religion and faith for us,
Oh Melek Sheykh Hesen, happy the soul to which you give and from which you do not take away:
You cause (it) to reach great heights.

(27) Truly you are Melek Sheykh Hesen,
You are a great commander,
You are the light of my eyes,
The Tradition halted[21] at the name of Sheykh Adi and Melek Sheykh Hesen.

Commentary

1 PX: "grandfather". As Sheykh Hesen was Sheykh Fekhr's father, the translation "ancestor" seems apt.
2 So PX for *mêrdar*.
3 I.e., the Yezidis, see above, T. 1. 7, Comm. n. 12.
4 Lit. "you are in a degree of many hopes".
5 So PX, who tentatively explains *xiş* as meaning "barren", hence "not right, mistaken". Cf. the expression *xişe xiş*, "rustling noise" (Izoli 1992: 449).

[6] *Non liquet.*
[7] So PX. For *paye*, "rank, degree" see İzoli 1992: 141. The word *kom* is clearly to be understood here in the sense of "group of ordinary people".
[8] So approximately PX: "a low place between stretches of land". See also Izoli 1992: 403, s.v. *şîw*.
[9] PX states that a *çogan* is the type of stick that is part of traditional Sufi apparel, whereas the word for "polo-stick" is *kaşo* (see below, v. 11). Both Persian usage and the present context suggest, however, that something like a polo-stick is meant here.
[10] PX: *ro* "between"; unconfirmed.
[11] Terms derived from the Islamic legal system.
[12] Lit. "for me". Possibly the text is corrupt here.
[13] Lit. "you are the market, I am the one who demands".
[14] So PX, unconfirmed.
[15] So PX, unconfirmed.
[16] Silêman and Jindî (1979: 125, n. 94) state that *zêw* is a variant of *zewî*, "land". PX informed me verbally in April 1992 that the mountains around Lalish are collectively called *zêwe*.
[17] Lit. "*al-ḥamdu li' llāh*", the opening words of the Islamic *Fātiḥa* prayer.
[18] The sense of these two lines is obscure.
[19] I.e., one of the *Suras* of the Qur'ān.
[20] (?) Lit. "dear, precious".
[21] I.e., it stayed and became manifest.

12: Qewlê Şêşimsê Tewrêzî[1]

(1) mestim ji qedeḥê
Lalişê xudanê qubehê
dê bi Şêşims deyn medehê

(2) mestim ji dîwanê
dê bi Şêşim[2] deyn beyanê
ya Şêşim te em înayine ser erkanê

(3) ya Şêşim tuy reḥîmî
xaliqê min ji qedîmî

(4) ya Şêşim tuy reḥmanî
xaliqê minê canî
li hemû derda tuy dermanî
li hemû muxliqa tuy reḥmanî

(5) ya Şêşim tu meferî
xaliqê minê her û herî
rizqa didey û rizqa diberî[3]

(6) herre mare, herre mişke
herre terre, herre xişke
ewan jik bi Şêşim hebit par û pişke

(7) herre reqe, herre mare,
herre mifxiya, herre dihare
ewan jik bi Şêşim hebit pişk û pare

(8) ji malê heta bi malê
Şêşims xudanê sîqalê
em Şêşims nabirrîn ji xiyalê

(9) ji derecê heta derecê
Şêşims xudanê ferecê
dest û damanêd Şêşims dê ṭiwaf keyn
şûna ke'bet-illahê û ḥecê

(10) ji sitûnê heta bi sitûnê
çend mifte heye li hindiru xizînê
ya Şêşims, te dane destî[4] me'rîfetê û nasînê

12: The Hymn of Sheykh Shems of Tabriz

(1) I am intoxicated from the cup,
Oh Lalish of the spires,
We shall give praise to Sheykh Shems.

(2) I am intoxicated from the assembly,
We shall expound (the virtues of) Sheykh Shems,
Oh Sheykh Shems, you have brought us to the cornerstones.[1]

(3) Oh Sheykh Shems, you are merciful,
You are my creator from ancient times.

(4) Oh Sheykh Shems, you are compassionate,
You are my dear creator,
For all ills you are the remedy,
To all creatures you are merciful.

(5) Oh Sheykh Shems, you are a refuge,
You are my creator for ever and ever,
You give sustenance and you take it away.[2]

(6) All[3] snakes, all mice,
All that is wet, all that is dry,
They too shall have a share and a part in (the sphere of) Sheykh Shems.

(7) All tortoises, all snakes,
All that is hidden, all that is open,
These too shall have a part and a share in (the sphere of) Sheykh Shems.

(8)[4] From house to house,
Sheykh Shems is the lord of grace,
We shall not give up our thoughts of Sheykh Shems.

(9) From stage to stage,
Sheykh Shems is the lord of dawn,
We shall kiss the hand of Sheykh Shems and the hem of his clothes,
The place of God's Ka'ba and (the object of) pilgrimage.

(10) From pillar to pillar,
There are some keys to the inside of the treasury,
Oh Sheykh Shems, you have given mystical knowledge and discernment into (our) hand.[5]

(11) ji çava heta devî
mora Şêşims lê dikeve[5]
ya Şêşim, mêra meleka ji germa
nahêlin em binivîn[6]

(12) ji serî heta pêya
ya Şêşims te em neqşandîn danayine serêd rêya
em Şêşim nabirrîn ji hîviya

(13) ya Şêşim te em xundîne ser vê xilmetê
li me veke deriyekî reḥmetê
ronayekê bideye ber me û çendî sunetê

(14) sunet ku sunete
zebûne kêm-taqete
ewan jî bi Şêşim hebûn eynete

(15) sunî ku di-sunîne
zebûnêd di îman dîne
ewan jî bi Şêşim hîvîne

(16) çend ṭeyr wê difirrin
ser çeng û baskêd xo da dinêrrin
ya Şêşim ew jik li ba te bi surrin

(17) cihû ku di-cihûne
selefxorin di bohtanê bûne[7]
ew jik li pê Şêşim diçûne

(18) fele(h) ku felene
yê[8] bi keşîş û abûnene
ew jik li pê Şêşim diherrine[9]

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 129-31.
[2] So Text (see Silêman and Jindî 1979: 130, n. 98).
[3] So Text.
[4] Text: *destê.*
[5] Text: *dikevî.*
[6] Text: *binivî.*
[7] Text: *di bohtan nebûne.*
[8] Text: *yî.*
[9] Text: *diherrene.*

(11) From eye to mouth,
The baptism of Seykh Shems falls on one,
The holy men and the angels, because they are actively busy (?),[6]
They do not allow one to sleep.

(12) From head to feet,
Oh Sheykh Shems, you designed us and set us upon our paths,
We shall not give up our hopes of Sheykh Shems.[7]

(13) Oh Sheykh Shems, you have called us to this (work of) service,
Open for us a door of mercy,
Grant a light to us, and to the Yezidis everywhere.

(14) A Yezidi, that is, the Yezidis,
Are weak and of little endurance,
They too had hopes of Sheykh Shems.

(15) A Yezidi, that is, the Yezidis,
Are the weak ones of the faith and the religion,[8]
They too have expectations of Sheykh Shems.

(16) Some birds are flying,
They look at their claws and wings,
Oh Sheykh Shems, they too share[9] the Mystery with you.

(17) The Jews, who are Jews,
Were usurers in Bohtan,[10]
They too have gone in search of Sheykh Shems.

(18) The Christians, who are Christians,
Who have priests and monks,
They too are going in search of Sheykh Shems.

Commentary

1 I.e., the essentials. See also above, T. 1. 9 with Comm. n. 15; 3. 12 with Comm. n. 14; 6. 6 with Comm. n. 9.
2 There can scarcely be any doubt as to the meaning of *diberî*, which appears to be a variant of Standard Kurm. *dibî*, from the verb *birin*.
3 The form seems to derive from *her*, "each".
4 From here to v. 15 the text corresponds to T. 6. 4-10, q.v. for further notes on the translation.
5 Note that this couplet differs from T. 6. 6.
6 Cf. T. 6. 7. The latter text is grammatically correct, whereas the present version is presumably corrupt.

[7] Note the slight difference between this line and T. 6. 8.
[8] Understanding the words *îman dîne* as *îman û dîne*. The original version may be that of T. 6. 9: *zebûnin di-mandîne*, "are weak and tired".
[9] Lit. "are in".
[10] PX understands the word *bohtan* as "untruth, slander" (see Rizgar 1993: 47, s.v. *buxtan*). Since there used to be a strong Jewish presence in towns like Zakho, however, the present interpretation seems more plausible.

13: Qewlê Pîr Şeref[1]

(1) mestim sikranim
nêçîrvanê bazanim
aşiqê surra giranim

(2) aşiqê wê surrême
derê dirba[2] vê tême
dirba baz jê ve têne

(3) xozî min bizaniya
bi rêya baze, kûye
da min bigirta binijniya[3]

(4) nijyare ne ji gul û bare
ye bi miske ye be mehwere
serê minî bi deftere

(5) davek min vedaye
derê dirba xoyaye
baziyek tê nimaye

(6) dilê min pê dibû şaye
dilê min pê dibû avaye
min nezanî min berdaye

(7) min davek vedave
derê dirba xoyave
baziyek kefte nave
mala min pê dibû ava[4]
min nedizanî min berdave

(8) dava min ji muwe
derê dirba vedibuwe
baziyek tê weribuwe
min nedizanî ji min berbuwe

(9) dava mine zirave
derê dirba xoyave
baziyek kefte nave
min nedizanî min berdave

13: The Hymn of Pîr Sheref

(1) I am drunk, I am intoxicated,
I am a hunter of falcons,[1]
I am a lover of the precious Mystery.

(2) I am a lover of that Mystery,
I am at the beginning of the road to it,
The road to the falcon leads on from there.

(3) If only I knew,
Where the way to the falcon is,
So that I could catch it and it could be exposed.[2]

(4) Constructing[3] (the trap) is not (a matter) of roses and spring (?),[4]
With musk and scent (?),[5]
My head is in the book.[6]

(5) I have set up a trap,
The mouth[7] is visible.
A falcon appears[8] in it.

(6) My heart was happy with this,
My heart was edified by this.
I was unaware, I let it go.

(7) I had[9] set up a trap,
The mouth was visible.
A falcon fell into it.
My family was edified by it.
I was unaware, I let it go.

(8) My trap is made of hair,
The mouth has been opened.
A falcon was caught in it.[10]
I did not know, it left me.

(9) My trap is a subtle one,
The mouth was visible.
A falcon fell into it.
I was unaware, I let it go.

13: Qewlê Pîr Şeref[1]

(1) mestim sikranim
nêçîrvanê bazanim
aşiqê surra giranim

(2) aşiqê wê surrême
derê dirba[2] vê tême
dirba baz jê ve têne

(3) xozî min bizaniya
bi rêya baze, kûye
da min bigirta binijniya[3]

(4) nijyare ne ji gul û bare
ye bi miske ye be mehwere
serê minî bi deftere

(5) davek min vedaye
derê dirba xoyaye
baziyek tê nimaye

(6) dilê min pê dibû şaye
dilê min pê dibû avaye
min nezanî min berdaye

(7) min davek vedave
derê dirba xoyave
baziyek kefte nave
mala min pê dibû ava[4]
min nedizanî min berdave

(8) dava min ji muwe
derê dirba vedibuwe
baziyek tê weribuwe
min nedizanî ji min berbuwe

(9) dava mine zirave
derê dirba xoyave
baziyek kefte nave
min nedizanî min berdave

13: The Hymn of Pîr Sheref

(1) I am drunk, I am intoxicated,
I am a hunter of falcons,[1]
I am a lover of the precious Mystery.

(2) I am a lover of that Mystery,
I am at the beginning of the road to it,
The road to the falcon leads on from there.

(3) If only I knew,
Where the way to the falcon is,
So that I could catch it and it could be exposed.[2]

(4) Constructing[3] (the trap) is not (a matter) of roses and spring (?),[4]
With musk and scent (?),[5]
My head is in the book.[6]

(5) I have set up a trap,
The mouth[7] is visible.
A falcon appears[8] in it.

(6) My heart was happy with this,
My heart was edified by this.
I was unaware, I let it go.

(7) I had[9] set up a trap,
The mouth was visible.
A falcon fell into it.
My family was edified by it.
I was unaware, I let it go.

(8) My trap is made of hair,
The mouth has been opened.
A falcon was caught in it.[10]
I did not know, it left me.

(9) My trap is a subtle one,
The mouth was visible.
A falcon fell into it.
I was unaware, I let it go.

(10) çî baziyekî qewiye
min di dava xoda diye
min nedizanî surra Şêxadiye

(11) çî baziyekî di cî da
min di dava xoda dîte[5]
min nedizanî surra Siltan Êzîde

(12) çî baziyekî mezine
wê keftiye dava mine
min nedizanî surra Melek[6] Şêsine

(13) çî baziyekî bukir
wa li dinê bûye zikir
min nedizanî surra Şêx Obekir

(14) çî baziyekî bi hinere
firrî, çû 'erşêd sere
min nedizanî surra Şêşimsê Tetere

(15) çî baziyekî bi-nûrîne
firrî, çû 'ezmîne
min nedizanî ko surra Fexredîne

(16) çî baziyekî girane
firrî, çû 'erşane
li 'erşa dewran dane
Mîr Hesilmemane
Nasirdînê Babane
Mîr Sicayê Sicane
Şêr Meḥmedê Reşane
Şêx Mendê Fexrane
Dawûdê bin Dermane
Pîrê Tercimane
rastiyê sipartibû[7] ligel yar û birane
lew kire serwerê her çilane

(17) li baza li bazgîra
ewin pisêd feqîra
ewin ṣeyadêd mîra
şevê û rojê li nêçîra
dîndara mîra

(10) What a strong falcon it is
(That) I saw in my trap.
I was unaware that it was the Mystery of Sheykh Adi.

(11) What a prompt falcon it is,
(That) I saw in my trap.
I was unaware that it was the Mystery of Sultan Êzîd.

(12) What a great falcon it is,
(That) has fallen into my trap.
I was unaware that it was the Mystery of Melek Sheykh Hesen.

(13) What an untainted[11] falcon
Has thus come to be recollected in the world.
I was unaware (that it was) the Mystery of Sheykh Obekr.

(14) What a skilful falcon it is:
It flew away, it went to the Throne[12] on high.
I was unaware that it was the Mystery of Sheykh Shems the Tartar.

(15) What a luminous falcon it is.
It flew away, it went to Heaven.
I was unaware that it was the Mystery of Fekhr el-Dîn.

(16) What a dear falcon it is.
It flew away, it went to the Throne,[13]
It circled around the Throne.
It is Mîr Hesen Meman.[14]
Naṣir el-Dîn Baban,
Mîr Sejadîn,[15]
The Lion Meḥmed Reshan,
Sheykh Mend, the son of Fekhr el-Dîn,
Dawûd the son of Derman,
The Pîr who is the Interpreter,
Have surrendered the Truth (?)[16] to their companion and brother:[17]
Thus he was made the leader of all Forty.

(17) Falcons, falcon-hunters,[18]
They are the sons of the Feqîrs,
They are the hunters of the Prince,[19]
Night and day they are hunting
For a glimpse of the Prince.

(18) baz hatin bazgîrane[8]
bar lal û durr mircane
wê dadinêne durrêd şarane
xasêd Şêxadî hatine ser bi serane
go: 'ezîzê mino hêşta erzane

(19) baz hatin bazgîranêd[9] boşe
durr îna bûn bi koşe[10]
go: 'ezîzê mino xozî te êk min firoşe

(20) baz hatin û bihorîn
hevalêd me ligel xo birîn
dilê me ji mîr û meḥebeta Siltan Şêxadî mabû kew-girî.

(21) mezela durr nijnî
baziyek jê dibeynî
kund hat û[11] şûnê dinihî

(22) mezela durr nijnî bû
baziyek jê firrî bû
kund hat û şûnê nihî bû

(23) mezela durr[12] girêda[13]
bazî jê difirrête
kund hatî şûnê dadinête

(24) Şeref lawê Dawûde
wa di destî da qelema 'ûde
ez şebekim di riya ca'ûde

(25) Şerefim lawê pîra
dil sotin rasta mîra
ez şebekim di riya feqîra

(26) Şerefim lawê Dû Icaze
di xebîr bin derwaze
ez şebekim di riya baze

(27) êk me divêt yî sipî baza
hûn xebîr bin
ez dişêm bidem van raza

(18) The falcons came to the falcon-hunters,[20]
(Their) loads (were) rubies and pearls.[21]
They laid down the pearls from their trousers.[22]
The holy men of Sheykh Adi congregated around them.
They said, "My dear, it is still cheap".

(19) The falcons came to the happy (?)[23] falcon-hunters,
They had brought pearls in their pockets.[24]
They said, "My dear, I wish you would sell one to me."[25]

(20) The falcons came and passed on,
They took our friends with them.[26]
Our hearts have remained deeply moved with love and devotion for Sultan Sheykh Adi.

(21) The dwelling of the Pearl was fashioned,
A falcon had departed from it,[27]
An owl[28] came and settled in (its) place.

(22) The dwelling of the Pearl had been fashioned,
The falcon had flown away from it,
An owl had come and settled in (its) place.

(23) The dwelling of the Pearl was locked up,
The falcon flies away from it,
An owl has come and settled in (its) place.

(24) Sheref[29] is the descendant of Dawûd,
The pen of aloe-wood is in his hand.[30]
I am a snare on the twisted path.

(25) I am Sheref, the descendant of Pîrs,
The right ones, the princes, who have burned their hearts (in longing).[31]
I am a snare on the path of the Feqîrs.

(26) I am Sheref, the descendant of the one who received authorisation.[32]
Pay heed to the Gate.[33]
I am a snare on the path of the falcon.
(27) We want one, a white falcon.[34]
Pay heed!
I can disclose those secrets.

(28) Şeref deng diket[14] ji esase
fihmê min zor qiyase
tu Xidrî anî Liyase?

(29) Xidro ya Xidrî
pirr hîmeta qadirî
li hemû cewaba ḥazirî

(30) Xidr we cewab daye
mela dixunit zekaye
wê zêde diket belaye.

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 142-5.
2 Text: *derba*.
3 The text has final *-e* in the last two words.
4 Text: *ave*.
5 In text all final words in this couplet end in *-a*.
6 Text: *melik*.
7 Another tradition has *bestibû* (Silêman and Jindî 1979: 144, n. 116).
8 Text: *bazirgane*.
9 Text: *bazirganêd*.
10 Text: *goşe*. Correction by PX.
11 Text: *hato*.
12 Text: *der*.
13 Text: *girêde*.
14 Text: *diget*.

(28) Sheref speaks of fundamentals,
My understanding is very great.[35]
Are you Khidr or Ilyas?

(29) Khidr, oh my Khidr!
You are full of effective (mystical) power,
You are ready (to give) all answers.

(30) Khidr has answered.[36]
The Mulla proclaims clever utterances,[37]
Thus he makes the disaster greater.

Commentary

1 The image of the falcon may go back to that bird's association with the concept of *xwarnah* in Zoroastrian literature. The symbolism has a direct parallel in the Ahl-e Ḥaqq tradition, see Mokri 1967.
2 For this translation of *nijnîn* see İzoli 1992: 295 ("be mounted").
3 PX: *nijyar* "constructing, way of building". Cf. *nijyarvan*, "engineer" (Izoli 1992: 295).
4 Lit. "roses and loads". The original version may have been *gul û buhar*, "roses and spring".
5 So PX, unconfirmed.
6 (?) PX: the book of life.
7 Lit. "the door of the road", i.e., the mouth of the trap (PX).
8 So PX, who derives the form from *nimandin*. The normal pres. stem of that verb, however, is *nimîn-* (İzoli 1992: 296). The form *nimaye* occurs again in T. 14. 19; 15. 8, and must be regarded as genuine, possibly deriving from a secondary verb **nimayîn*,"to appear, be visible".
9 PX: *vedave* is a variant of *vedabû*, *xoyave* of *xwiya bû*.
10 So PX. Cf. *werîn*, "to be stuck", and *wer kirin*, "to fasten, glue" (Izoli 1992: 437).
11 Lit. "virginal".
12 The word has a pl. obl. ending here and in v. 16, below.
13 See preceding note.
14 The head of the Forty Holy Men (PX), cf. above, T. 9. 41, and Ch. 4, Appendix.
15 So PX.
16 Cf. T. 9. 41, where the holy men are said to have surrendered their souls.
17 If PX is right in regarding Hesen Meman as the subject of the next line, the form *birane* is probably to be translated as a sg.
18 The prep. *li* seems untranslatable here.
19 The pl. obl. ending was probably adopted for the sake of the rhyme.
20 The text has *bazirgan*, "merchants".
21 Lit. "pearls and pearls".
22 Lit. "of their trousers". The translation assumes that *şar* is a variant of *şal*, "trousers; shawl", cf. Rizgar 1993: 175.
23 For this translation cf. *boş*, "abundance, blessing" (İzoli 1992: 73).
24 PX: *koş* "the front pocket of a long shirt (*kiras*)".
25 So PX. The grammar of the line seems strange; rhyme is probably a factor.

[26] I.e, those who have seen the manifestation of the divine have departed this life. The passage seems to refer to the brief appearance of a spark of divine light, which became incorporated in Sheykh Adi and his Companions, and its subsequent departure.
[27] From here on the text could not be discussed with PX or other informants. The translation of *jê beynî* is based on the parallel passage in v. 23, below. Cf. also Per. *az bayn raftan*, "to disappear".
[28] Owls are generally regarded as unlucky creatures in this part of the Middle East.
[29] I.e., the author of the *Qewl*, cf. below.
[30] The line suggests that the author composed the *Qewl* in written form, which is possible but hardly likely.
[31] A guess.
[32] Text: *dw'j'zh*. If the reading is correct, the words probably refer to a companion of Sheykh Adi who had received permission to teach in his name.
[33] Lit. "be aware of the doorway". The term *derwaze* may conceivably denote a 'gate' through which ancient wisdom reaches the believers, i.e., Sheref himself.
[34] Lit. "one we need, of the falcons white". The syntax is twisted to fit the rhyme.
[35] So PX for *qiyas*, here and in T. 4. 3, q.v.
[36] The translation assumes that *we* here is a variant of *wa*, "thus, so", rather than an obl. of *hûn*, "you".
[37] (?) Lit. "recites sagaciousness".

14: Qewlê Şêx 'Erebegê Entûşî[1]

(1) padşayê min tuyî yekê temam
Siltan Êzîde, 'eleykim el-selam
eşlê ġafila ji ḥedîd
ġafil kor bûn, ew surr nedît

(2) eşlê ġafila ji hesin
ġafil dîwanê tûjin weke elmas
ġafil kor bûn, riya Siltan Êzîdê min ḥeq nenas

(3) zerr bavêje nava agirî
xilte venaşêrî
zêrrê bê ser eşlê xweyî berî

(4) zêrr madeyekî çêye
osta lê dinihêre
şerraf zane çi bihêye

(5) me'niya zêrrîn vaye
zêrr ku şeffêra kutaye
osta lê dinihêrte
şerraf zane çi *bihaye[2]

(6) dibêjime we alê kitave
pirs bikin ji alê Medînê, ji alê Ke'vê
çikanî ew kî bû dot ḥelal kir li bavî?

(7) berî qîl û qal kir
ew Adem bû dot lê ḥelal kir
şêrane lê wiṣal kir

(8) newêrim bikelimim
wekî ez bibêjim, suneta[3] berî Ademe
ezê biricimim.

(9) suneta berî Ademe
ew me'nîke mezine
ḥiḍreta mîrê mine

14: The Hymn of Sheykh Erebeg Entûsh

(1) My King you are the perfect one,
O Sultan Êzîd, peace be upon you.
The nature[1] of the heedless is of iron,
The heedless were blind, they did not see the Mystery.[2]

(2) The nature of the heedless is of iron,
The heedless are an assembly, sharp as diamonds,
The heedless were blind, they did not give recognition to the path of my Sultan Êzîd.

(3) (If) you throw gold into the fire,
You cannot make the molten substance[3] disappear.
The gold will be (true to) the nature it had before.

(4) Gold is a good substance.
The master (smith) looks at it,
The moneychanger knows its value.

(5) The significance of gold is this:
The gold, which the goldsmiths[4] have beaten,
The master has looked at it,
The moneylender knows what it is worth.

(6) I tell you, people of the Book,
Ask the people of Madina, the people of the Ka'ba:
Who was it who made the daughter licit to the father?[5]

(7) Before he (began to) speak,
It was Adam who made the daughter licit to him.
He embraced her with lion-like vigour.

(8) I dare not say it.
If I say that it is a custom from before Adam's time,
I shall be stoned.[6]

(9) It is the custom from before Adam's time.
That is a thing of great significance
It is the presence of my Prince.[7]

(10) dibêjime we sunetê
rojê heştê hezar tehlî tengî li ser we tê
hûn *bi[4] ḥesûdî[5] menihêrin malê şil'etê

(11) mevê[6] çendiyek malê, çendiyek zêrre
roja axiretê hûn wan va ji heve vavêrin

(12) şil'et ku heye, buġd û te'ne
ewin dijminê Siltane
roja axiretê ew aşê bigerre xûna wane

(13) rojekê wê bibe gaziye
şil'etê bimîne rût û te'ziye
haşa wê[7] beraziye

(14) beraz jî[8] xuliqetekî çêye
sibeye, roj hiltêye
ew jî ji kerema xwe tîne navê xwedêye

(15) ḥeşaş jî xulqê zere[9]
wekî xweyî rojê ḥeft cara lê biqehire
tu kîn buġzê dilê xwe da nagre

(16) talib, sofî ew mellene
a derewa xengerene
roja axiretê serê wan devê dojê, cihenimê va diçine[10]

(17) çi aşekî hûr-binyane[11]
Xwedê te'ala kevirê wî aşî je xezebê dane
roja axiretê serê talib sofî û mella tê ḥêrane

(18) kitêva we nimaye
Xwedê te'ala kevirê wî aşî ji xezebê daye
roja axiretê serê talib, sofî û mella tê nona deyne

(19) dibêjime we suniya
hûn desta ber medin ji mala[12] 'Adiya
hîviya wana zor hîviye

(20) hîviya wan hîviyeke bi[13]-mefere
Şêxadîye, Şêxmende, Şemsê Tetere
ewin zû têne bangîn û meḥderê

(10) I tell you (people of the) Tradition,[8]
Eighty thousand trials and tribulations will come upon you each day,
(But) do not look with envy at the house of the *Sharī'a*.

(11) Do not desire so much wealth, so much gold,
On the Last Day you and those will be separated from each other.[9]

(12) When the (followers of the) *Sharī'a* are present, (there is) disgust and blame.
They are the enemies of the Sultan.
On the Last Day, that mill will grind their blood.

(13) One day there will be a call,
The (followers of the) *Sharī'a* will be left naked and wailing.
Heaven preserve us from those swine.

(14) The pig itself[10] is a good creature.
It is morning, the sun is coming up,
It, too, generously bears witness to[11] the name of God.

(15) The hashish-smoker has a yellow look.[12]
Even if you are angry with him seven times a day,
He does not harbour rancour or disgust in his heart.

(16) Students of religion and Sufis, they are (all) Mullas.
They make pointless noises, (spouting) lies.[13]
On the Last Day their heads will go to the mouth of the inferno, to hell.

(17) What a finely-grinding[14] mill it is!
God the Most High has created the stone of that mill in his wrath.
On the Last Day the heads of students of religion, Sufis and Mullas will be dismayed.

(18) Your Book shows:[15]
God, the Most High has created the stone of that mill out of wrath
On the Last Day He shall place the heads of students of religion, Sufis and Mullas between them (i.e., the millstones).

(19) I tell you, people of the Tradition,
Do not renounce the house of the family of Adi.
(Your) hope in them is likely to be fulfilled.[16]

(20) Hope in them is hope in a place of refuge:[17]
Sheykh Adi, Sheykh Mend and Sheykh Shems the Tartar,
They come quickly (in response) to calls for help, to intercede.

(21) ew zû têne bangê
Şêşimsê min xudanê mangê
sunetxanê nahêle avdeve,[14] nahêle avistange

(22) hewara me xwedê surrê[15] tarî
me li wê dîtin zor mirarî
me li wê nexteke selef[16] vexwarî

(23) me li wê vexwarî nexteke selefê
beḥra xwedê kûre, kes nagihîje terefê
me li wê dîtin sê ḥerfê

(24) her sê ḥerfê wêne
pênca dudû fereq jêne
ḥereme, ne ji wê niqlêne
bila eva dinya me bikşêne

(25) ewe miletê xerqe-pariste[17]
xerqe me'qûl kir ser xwe ra dêxiste
roja axiretê wê jê herre nûreke keske
destê Siltan Êzîd ser çiqas meseb, çiqas dîn, çiqas deste

(26) temametî Şêxadî
eme kêmin, Şêxadî temame
em 'ebdin, beşerin, beḥra gun(eh)ane
sibê ḥeta êvarê hezar cûre xeber *ji[18] devê me derdikeve

Textual Notes

[1] From O. and J. Jelîl 1978: 5-7. The text has "*Şêx E'rebegî I'nt'ûzî*".My informants in Lalish identified "I'nt'ûz" with a legendary figure they called Entûsh. The orthography has been 'normalised', see below, T. 3, 4.
[2] Text: *bihête*.
[3] Text here *et passim*: *sunete*.
[4] Text omits.
[5] Text: *h'ewsûdî*.
[6] Text: *mebê*.
[7] Text: *wî*.
[8] Text: *berazî*.
[9] In the original text all final words of this verse end in *-î*: *zerî, biqehirî, nagrî*.
[10] Text: *diçeme*.
[11] Text: *binyame*.
[12] Text: *malê*.
[13] Text: *bê*. Correction by PX.
[14] Text: *edav*. Correction by PX.

(21) They come quickly to calls,
My Sheykh Shems is the lord of the moon.
He will not leave the Yezidi nation in great hardships,[18] nor in great difficulties.[19]

(22) Our cry for help goes out to the lord of the dark Mysteries.
There we have seen many pearls
We have profited from this for a short while.[20]

(23) We have profited from this for a short while,
God's ocean is deep, no one reaches the shore.
There we have seen three letters.[21]

(24) All three letters are thus.
Fifty-two groups derive from these
They are forbidden, they do not belong to this line.
(Rather) let this[22] world break us (if it must).

(25) This is the nation that reveres the *khirqe*.
It has instituted the proper use[23] of the *khirqe*, and has put it on.
Sultan Êzîd has power over so many[24] religious schools, so many faiths, so many sects.

(26) Perfection belongs to Sheykh Adi.
We fall short, Sheykh Adi is perfect.
We are slaves, humans, an ocean of sins.
From morning till evening a thousand kinds of talk drop from our mouth.

Commentary

[1] Lit. "origin".
[2] The grammar of the line is strange. In Standard Kurdish the words would mean "the Mystery did not see them".
[3] Lit. "residue, dregs" (Izoli 1992: 448).
[4] The word originally meant "coppersmith".
[5] The implication of vv. 6-9 appears to be that, at some stage in the history of the Yezidi community, consanguineous unions were not frowned upon. As in the case of Zoroastrianism, such practices seem so alien to many modern adherents of the faith, that one of my informants confidently claimed that the text must be a forgery.
[6] So PX and several other informants. Cf. Ar. *rajama*, "to stone".
[7] I.e., it is authorised by him(?).
[8] I.e., Yezidis.
[9] The grammar (viz. the form *wan)* is unusual, but there can hardly be any doubt as to the sense of the line. It was confirmed, moreover, by several informants.
[10] An approximate translation, lit. "the pig also". The lines stress the distinction between the metaphorical 'swine', viz the followers of the *Sharī'a*, and the actual pig or wild boar (PX).

[15] Text: *sorê*.
[16] Text: *self*.
[17] In the original text the final words of all lines end in *-î*.
[18] Text omits.

11 Lit. "brings".
12 Lit. "nature". The connection between this verse and those set around it seems obscure. The interpretation given here was confirmed by PX.
13 PX: *xengere* "annoying others by making pointless noises" (unconfirmed).
14 So PX for *hur-binyan* (unconfirmed).
15 So PX. On *nimaye* see above, T. 13. 5, Comm. n. 8.
16 Lit. "hope of them is much of a hope".
17 Lit. "your hope is a hope in a place of refuge". Unless one reads *bê meferr*, in which case the line would mean, approximately "your hope is a desperate one".
18 PX: *avdev* "place where water reaches the lips, great hardship".
19 PX: *avistang* "impassable place, difficulty". Similarly İzoli 1992: 35, s.v. *asteng*.
20 Lit. "we have consumed the interest" (PX).
21 I.e., possibly, *'ayn, dāl* and *yā*, i.e., the name of Sheykh Adi (?). See above, T. 4. 17 with Comm. n. 29.
22 The final vowel of *eva* is probably influenced by that of *dinya*.
23 So PX for *me'qûl kir*.
24 Lit. "how many".

15: Qewlê Pîr Dawûd[1]

(1) qedrê mêray çende
î bê gilî-y[2] bê gazende
da bideyn medhêd Dawûdê xerbende

(2) qedrê mêra weye
bê gilî-y bê gazendeye
da bideyn medhêd[3] Dawûdê xerbendeye

(3) bifikrine vî rengî
Şêx Mûse û Siltanê Zengî
Dê çine ba Şêxadî bi cengî

(4) Siltanê Zeng mêrekî bi-kare
ber diçin dihol û niqare
barek kiri buwe bare
aliyek sêke, aliyek jehre
Daqûd kire qasid, ba Şêxadî ve dihinare

(5) Dawûd wê diçiye
Şêxadî jê pirsiye
Dawûdo, tû bi xudê key îlahiye
tû dê bêjîye rastîye
diyariya Siltanê Zeng bo min hinarte[4] çîye

(6) Dawûd deng diket bi zare
'ezîzê min çû nîne ji pêş te ve neye diyare
diyariya Siltanê Zeng bo te hinarte[5]
aliyek sêke, aliyek jehre

(7) Dawûdo weye we nîne
tû barê xo dayîne
aliyek rone, aliyek hingivîne

(8) Dawûdî barê xo danaye
Şêxadî da, sed keramet nimaye
Dawûd ser destê Şêxadî şehde daye

(9) Dawûd vegerriya, Siltanê Zeng jê pirsiye
Dawûd tû bi xudê key îlahiye
da bêjiye min rastiye
ka hiner û kerametêd wî şêxî çiye

15: The Hymn of Pîr Dawûd

(1) How great is the power of the holy men!
(It is) without complaints, without reproach.
Let us give songs of praise to Dawûd the loyal servant.[1]

(2) The power of holy men is like that:
It is without complaint, without reproach.
Let us give songs of praise to Dawûd, who is the loyal servant.

(3) Think in this way:
Sheykh Mûsa and the Zangid Sultan,[2]
Are about to go to Sheykh Adi to wage war.

(4) The Zangid Sultan is an important[3] man,
Drums and kettle-drums go before him.[4]
He had loaded a load:
On one side there was vinegar, on (the other) side poison.
He made Dawûd his emissary, he sent it to Sheykh Adi.

(5) So Dawûd went.[5]
Sheykh Adi asked him,
"Oh Dawûd, by God, in God's name,[6]
You shall tell the truth:
What is the gift that the Zangid Sultan has sent me?"

(6) Dawûd spoke, full of distress,
"My dear, there is nothing that is not clear to[7] you.
The gift which the Zangid Sultan has sent you,
Has vinegar on one side and poison on the other."

(7) "Oh Dawûd, that is as may be.
Set down your burden:
On one side it has fat, on the other honey!"

(8) Dawûd set down his load.
He gave it to Sheykh Adi; a hundred miracles became manifest.
Dawûd pronounced the confession of the faith before Sheykh Adi.

(9) Dawûd returned, the Zangid Sultan asked him,
"Oh Dawûd, by God, in God's name,
Come, tell me the truth:
What are the powers and miracles of that Sheykh?"

(10) Dawûd wê we dibêye
mîro, vegerre[6] were ser rêye
hinera Şêxadî bê şekk hinera xudêye

(11) Siltanê Zeng êke neçê kir
'ejêbî[7] kibar li nefsê kir
girt û ji bin[8] da zimanê Dawûd jêkir

(12) Pîr Dawûd pîrekî bi-erkane
sê roj û sê şevane
nav leşkerê Siltanê Zeng gerriya, bê zarî bê zimane
ziman nebû bi desta didet xeberdane

(13) Pîr Dawûd pîrekî mêrsere
sê roj û sê şevî derandere
ziman nebû, *bi[9] desta wê didet xebere

(14) Pîr Dawûd vedigerriye
Şêxadî pif kire deviye
heft cara; zimanê Dawûd ji berî çêtir digerriye

(15) Dawûdo hilu herre
heke li xêre heke li şerre
hîmeta min hebit bi te re

(16) Dawûd dibêjit: hey pedşê mino-y bêrî
heke tû kerameteke zimanî meztir min re nehinêrî,
Siltan Zeng û malxoyê xo bi çu renga naspêre[10]

(17) Şêxadî bi-keramete
Dawûdo me bi te şerte
me bi te 'eynete
heke siltanî Zeng bo me bike berbate

(18) Şêxadî dod dixweste
beḥra nazokî dibin çengê[11] dibeste
bi nav leşkerê Siltanî Zeng ve kiribû qeste

(19) Dodê şidênî
siwar be li borrê kulbênî
here leşkerê Siltanî Zeng bo me bişkênî

(10) Dawûd then spoke as follows,
"Oh Prince, turn back, take to the road (back)!
The power of Sheykh Adi is without doubt the power of God."

(11) The Zangid Sultan did a wicked thing.
He had an extraordinary arrogance of mind.
He seized Dawûd and cut off his tongue from its base.

(12) Pîr Dawûd is a Pîr of solid faith,[8]
Three days and three nights
He roamed among the soldiers of the Zangid Sultan, without lament, without a tongue.
He had no tongue; he spoke with his hands.

(13) Pîr Dawûd is a courageous[9] Pîr,
For three days and three nights entirely,
He was without a tongue, he spoke with his hands.

(14) Pîr Dawûd went back.
Sheykh Adi blew on his mouth,
Four times; Dawûd's tongue became better than before.

(15) "Oh Dawûd, come on, go!
Whether in peace or in war,
My miraculous protection will be with you."

(16) Dawûd said, "Oh my primordial King,
If you do not send me a greater miracle (than that of my) tongue,
The Zangid Sultan and his steward will never submit (to you)."

(17) Sheykh Adi can perform miracles.
(He said), "Oh Dawûd, I have a Covenant with you.
I have hopes of you,
If the Zangid Sultan should do evil to us."

(18) Sheykh Adi summoned Dawûd,
He tied the Ethereal Ocean[10] under his arm,
He sent him among the army of the Zangid Sultan.

(19) "Oh fearless[11] Dawûd,
Mount the steed Kulbênî,[12]
Go and destroy the Zangid Sultan's army for us."

(20) Şêxadî Dod dihinare
borrê kulbênî kiribû siware
nav leşkerê Siltanî Zeng ve dihinare
çend zad û êmîşî wan dixware
Siltan Zeng û malxoyê xo mabûn di-şermîn di-şermezare

(21) Siltanî Zeng ji malxoyê xo pirsiye
tu bi xudê key îlahiye
dê bêjiye rastîye
ka zigê Dodê çîye

(22) malxo deng diket bi zare
mîro, zigê Dodê beḥre, dinya û 'alemê pê nîne çare
ji ġêrê milkê[12] Cebare

(23) malxo deng diket ji nehîne
mîro, Dodê hilîne
wa di bin da beḥreke şîne
dinya û 'alemê çare pê nîne
ji ġêrê qudbê[13] zemîne

(24) Şêxadî xudanê qirarê
mêr cema kirin li meġarê
Pîr Dawûd xelat kiribû wê carê

(25) Pîr Dawûd pîrekî bi-erkane
ligel çil pîra kire pîrê kermane
şukra me suniya ṣedqe û ḥeya û îmane

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 112-15.
[2] Text: *guley*. Correction by PX.
[3] So text.
[4] Text: *hinarti*.
[5] Text: *hinarti*.
[6] Text: *vegerrê*.
[7] Text: *'ujêbî*.
[8] Text: *ben*. Correction by PX.
[9] Text omits.
[10] Text: *nasipêrî*.
[11] Text: *çengî*.
[12] Text: *melkê*.
[13] So text.

(20) Sheykh Adi sent Dawûd,
He had made him ride the steed Kulbênî,
He sent him among the Zangid Sultan's army.
He ate whatever food they had;
The Zangid Sultan and his steward were left disgraced and shamed.[13]

(21) The Zangid Sultan asked his steward,
"By God, in God's name,
You shall tell the truth!
What is Dawûd's stomach (made of)?"

(22) The steward spoke, full of distress,
"Oh Prince, Dawûd's stomach is an ocean; neither the world nor the earth can deal with it,
Except the kingdom of the Almighty."

(23) The steward urged in secret,
"Oh Prince, get rid of Dawûd!
Under him, there is a blue ocean.[14]
Neither the world nor the earth can deal with it.
Except the Pole of the Earth."[15]

(24) Sheykh Adi can always be relied on.[16]
He assembled the holy men in the Cavern,
On that occasion he gave a gift to Pîr Dawûd.

(25) Pîr Dawûd is a Pîr of solid faith (?).
From among[17] the forty Pîrs, he was made Pîr of Kirman.[18]
Thank God that we, people of the Tradition,[19] have uprightness, modesty and faith.

Commentary

[1] For this translation of *xerbende* see İzoli 1991: 444 ("faithful, attached, slave, prisoner of war"); Rizgar 1993: 198 ("slave").
[2] I.e., Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', on whom see Patton 1991, and above, Ch. 2. On the Zangid dynasty see Hitti 1937: 644f.
[3] Lit. "busy".
[4] So PX.
[5] The form *diçiye* clearly represents Standard Kurm. *diçûye*.
[6] PX: *key ilahiye* is synonymous with *bi xudê*.
[7] Lit. "from in front of you".
[8] Lit. "with foundations".
[9] A guess. The word *mêrser* can either mean, lit., "having the head of a man", or "leader of men".

[10] I.e., a mythical, invisible ocean which contains everything (PX).
[11] So PX. The word may be connected with *şidîn*, "tension" (İzoli 1992: 399), and *şidandin*, "to tighten" (Rizgar 1993: 177), and mean, approximately, "taut, of fearless energy".
[12] PX: the name means "very hungry".
[13] A similar story is told about "Sheykh Adi's servant" and Mar Yuḥenna, see Furlani 1936: 82.
[14] Or "an ocean of affliction"? The word *şîn* can either mean "blue", or "mourning".
[15] On the concept of the 'Pole' see Schimmel 1975: 200.
[16] Lit. "is the lord of constancy".
[17] Lit. "with".
[18] (?) Perhaps Kirmanshah?
[19] I.e., the Yezidis.

16: Qewlê Şêxadî û Mêra[1]

(1) Şêxadî xudanê keremê
dahir bû li 'erebê li 'ecemê

(2) dahir bû Bêt el-Fare
qesd kir, hate Hekare
Lalişê mêr lê cema dibûne

(3) li miġare qesd kir hate Lalişe
ber guhêd wan keftibû guşguşe
ew şay dibûn dil pê bûne xoşe

(4) Şêxadî ji Şamê hate
bi şerqiya kir xebate
Meḥmed Reşan kir xelate

(5) xelat kir Meḥmed Reşa
dabuwê me'aşê şeşa
ew kire serwerê mêra

(6) xebere li nav seyyîda[2]
dahir bû şêxekî şedîda
li Lalişê lê cema dibûn mirîda

(7) xebere li nav 'ecema
dahir bû şêxekî bi kerema
Lalişê mirîd lê dibûn cema

(8) xebere di nav 'ecemistanê
dahir bû şêxekî bi me'nê
Lalişê mirîd pê kirin dîwanê

(9) hatin şêxêd keremdare
borr şêre, qamçiyê wan mare
li Şêxadî diken pisyare[3]

(10) ew bûn şêxêd ehli xêre
qamçiyê wan mare, borr şêre
navê Şêxadî diken pisyêre

16: The Hymn of Sheykh Adi and the Holy Men

(1) Sheykh Adi is the lord of kindness,
He appeared among Arabs and non-Arabs.

(2) He appeared in Beyt el-Far,
He migrated, he came to Hakkari.
At Lalish holy men gathered around him.

(3) He migrated to the Cavern, he came to Lalish.
A rumour had reached their ears,
They became happy, their hearts were pleased about it.

(4) Sheykh Adi came from the West,[1]
He was active among the people of the East.
He gave a reward to Meḥmed Reshan.[2]

(5) To Meḥmed Reshan he gave a reward,
He gave him sustenance (enough) for six men.
He made him the leader of the holy men.

(6) There was news among the Sayyids,
(That) a new powerful Sheykh had appeared.
(And) disciples had gathered around him at Lalish.

(7) There was news among the non-Arabs
(That) a Sheykh had appeared who performed miracles,
(And) at Lalish disciples had gathered around him.

(8) There was news in the land of the non-Arabs,
(That) a Sheykh had appeared (who knew) the meanings,[3]
(And) at Lalish (his) disciples had assembled around him.

(9) Sheykhs came who could perform miracles,
Their steed a lion, their whip a snake.[4]
They enquired about Sheykh Adi.

(10) They were Sheykhs of the righteous people,
Their whip a snake, their steed a lion.
They enquired about Sheykh Adi's name.

(11) ew bûn şêxê ji Ebû 'l-Qatê
hatibû ba Şêxadî ḥikyatê
go: Şêxadî qutbê zemên,[4] em li qatê

(12) Şêxadî kiri bû firware
şêr Meḥmed Reşan li berekî kir siware
go: gelî mêra we çî heye li bale?

(13) ya Meḥmed Reşan, siwar be li berekî
ewan mêra *hêwir[5] nema li derekî
ji wan bipirse xeberekî

(14) her bi bext û kerb û kîne
ji wan bike pirsîne
birrêne zerb û kerameta wan çîne
ji nû paş ber wan keve bo min bîne

(15) şêx bi rê bûn ji male
bi gorrin bi gefin bi gale
Meḥmed Reşan dibêjit: we çî heye li bale?

(16) ji mêje ewin di-rêberin
neqîbin bi serwerin
Şêxadî kerem kiriye hûn werin

(17) Seyyid Ebû Wefa deng hiltêne[6]
kibarê deynin da em biçîn miskînî

(18) çendî seyyidîne
deng diken bi nihîne[7]
ev bere ruḥ tê nîne

(19) wê dibêjit Şêxî seyyida
gava Meḥmed Reşan dîta
tu şêxî anî mirîda

(20) ez Meḥmedê Reşîme
siwarê berîme
ez bixo mirîdê Şêxadîme

(21) hatin şêxêd tebave
wê li Şêxadî diken ṣilave
Şêxadî ji keremê 'elêk vedave

(11) They were Sheykhs of Abū 'l-Qāt.[5]
He had come to Sheykh Adi to talk to him,
He said, "Sheykh Adi is the *quṭb* of the time, we are (merely living) in time (?)[6]."

(12) Sheykh Adi gave a command:
He made the Lion Meḥmed Reshan mount a piece of rock.
He said, "Oh holy men, what is in your minds?"

(13) "Oh Meḥmed Reshan, mount a piece of rock.
Those holy men (will) have no place of refuge left anywhere.[7]
(Then) ask them to comment!"

(14) "With honour, anger and wrath,
You must question them.
See what their abilities[8] and miraculous powers are,
And then lead them, bring them to me."

(15) The Sheykhs set out from home,
Bragging,[9] with menacing gestures, with much noise.
Meḥmed Reshan said, "What do you have in mind?"

(16) For a long time these were the (spiritual) guides;
They are the chiefs,[10] the leaders.
(He said), "Sheykh Adi has invited you to come."

(17) Sayyid Abū 'l-Wafā[11] raised his voice,
"Let us stop this boasting and let us go (to visit) the poor one."

(18) All the Sheykhs
Exclaimed secretly,
"There (can be) no life in that piece of rock."

(19) The leader of the Sayyids said,
When he saw Meḥmed Reshan,
"Are you the Sheykh or a disciple?"

(20) "I am Meḥmed the Reshî,[12]
I am the rider of the rock.
I am truly[13] Sheykh Adi's disciple!"

(21) The Sheykhs arrived, all of them,
And saluted Sheykh Adi.
Sheykh Adi kindly returned their salute.

(22) Şêxadî bixoy siltane
ê bi edebe ê bi erkane
ewî cîhê mêra nîşan dane

(23) Meḥmed Reşan sekinî li Bewarê
got: hûn bi xêr hatin vêcarê
şêx ez nînim, şêx ewe li miġarê

(24) mêr li Meḥmed Reşan fikirîn
rabûn têk zinzilîn
li derê miġarê weṣilîn

(25) mêr weṣilîn li derê miġarê
bi riwa çûne xwarê.
go: ord û şibaş jibo xudanê Hekarê

(26) Seyyid Eḥmed hat li cenga
Xidr hiltêne[8] denga
go: ciyê mêra sa'etê tenge[9]

(27) Meḥmed Reşan dibê Seyyid Eḥmeda
tuy serwerê hemiya
heke te pişta xo bi miġarê veniya
li te û mêra fira be[10] ciya

(28) Seyyid Eḥmned deng diket bi şîne
hêja me avek divêye
ji pêşada em pê bigrîn destaw nivêje

(29) Şêxadî xoş siltêne
deng diket bi nihêne
ḥewceya me bi avê nîne
destnivêje ji meyizîne

(30) avekî ji xorra derken
destê xo sunetê ferken
ji nû paş mîrê xo bi neder ken

(31) Şêxadî bi nedere
wekaz dabû bere
deng li avê dikire
gotî: te'al ya zimzim were

(22) Sheykh Adi is truly Sultan.
He is polite and reliable.[14]
He showed the men their places.

(23) Meḥmed Reshan halted at the ford.[15]
He said, "This time you are welcome,
I am not the Sheykh, the Sheykh is there in the Cavern."

(24) The holy men thought about Meḥmed Reshan.
They went up, and they were all dismayed.
They reached the doorway of the Cavern.

(25) The holy men reached the doorway of the Cavern.
In proper order they descended.
They said, "Homage and praise to the lord of Hakkari."

(26) Sayyid Aḥmad[16] became obstreperous.[17]
Khidr[18] raised his voice,
Saying, "There is not enough room[19] for the holy men at the moment."

(27) Meḥmed Reshan said to Sayyid Aḥmad,
"You are the leader of (them) all.
If you rub[20] your back against the Cavern,
There will be more than enough place for you and the holy men."

(28) Sayyid Aḥmad began to whine,
"We also need some water,
Before anything else, to make our ablutions and pray."

(29) Sheykh Adi is a good Sultan,
He exclaimed quietly,
"We have no need of water
Our purification consists in contemplation."

(30) "Bring out some water for yourselves.
Wash your hands as is obligatory according to the *Sunna*.[21]
Then, afterwards, face your Lord."[22]

(31) Sheykh Adi, in full view,
Beat his stick against the rock.
He spoke to the water,
Saying, "He is Most High. Come forth, oh Zemzem!"

(32) ji qewlê pisê Cemî
tenê Şêxadî bikelime[11]
av dê derkeve[12]
ji birka 'eyn zimzimî

(33) ya mêra me'niye û çêre
çiyê wan xwasti buwe
Şêxadî îna bû jêre
tezbî û wekazê Seyyid Eḥmed el-kebîr îna bûwe

(34) we dibêjit Meḥmed Reşane
Şêxadî bixo siltane
av îna bo mêrane

(35) çendî seyyidîne
deng diken nehîne
taqeta me li av berdanê nîne

(36) Şêxadî bi nedere
deng li avê dikire
av gurgur çû dere

(37) hûn şêxî binasin
ligel êk û dû birazin
alîka şêra ji Şêxadî bixwazin

(38) we dibêjit Xidr neqîbe
padşayê minoy ḥebîbe
borr ji te[13] dixwazin neṣîbe

(39) we dibêjit kêla
kêşa bû liber Şêxadî dexîla
go: alîka şêra çêla

(40) Şêxadî we dikir firware
çêl bi nav şêra dihinare
ne çêla şêr hêlan ne mirîşka mare

(41) li nav neqîba bû beyane
go: girîn dil mane
go: şêrêd me çûn em peya mane

(32) As was said by the son of Jem,[23]
"(Even) if Sheykh Adi merely speaks,[24]
Water will come out
From the stream[25] of the Zemzem well."[26]

(33) Oh holy men, there is meaning (here) and a matter for discussion!
That which they had desired,
Sheykh Adi had brought down.[27]
He brought the rosary and stick of Seyyid Eḥmed the great.[28]

(34) Thus speaks Meḥmed Reshan,
"Sheykh Adi is truly Sultan.
He brought water for the holy men."

(35)[29] "All the Sayyids
Secretly exclaimed,
'We have not the power to release water.'"

(36) "Sheykh Adi, in full view,
Spoke to the water.
The water burst out (with the sound of) thunder."

(37) "You must know the Sheykh,
(Now) go to sleep, all of you.
Ask Sheykh Adi for food for your lions."

(38) Thus spoke Khidr the *neqîb*,[30]
"My beloved king,
Our steeds are demanding their share from you."

(39) Thus spoke Kêla,[31]
He laid his requests[32] before Sheykh Adi,
He said, "The (proper) food for lions is cows."

(40) Sheykh Adi commanded thus.
He had cows brought among the lions.
The cows did not leave the lions in peace, nor the chickens the snakes.[33]

(41) It became clear to the leaders,
They said, "We are left with weeping hearts."
They said, "Our lions are gone, we have to go on foot."

(42) li nav neqîba bû estexbêre
li nav ḥizn û nehêle
go ḥeya me ji wan nema şêre

(43) Seyyid Eḥmedo tu bi vê yekê nasipêrî
qayim nabî bi êkî bêrî
çima tu bi tenê[14] xo bi destê Şêxadî nasipêrî

(44) heke te bawerî bi vê netê
kerem ke em biçîn ser çiyayê nav Mişetê
bayek wê tê ji reḥmetê

(45) kerem ke em rabîn ser pêye
hincî mêrê ḥukm ket rîh[15] û simbêlêd xoye
şêxînî bo wî li cîye[16]

(46) Şêxadî li wan deng dikete
kerem ke em biçîne ser çiyayê nav Mişete
da bifikirîn beyane, Siltan Şêxadiye

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 104-9.
2 So text.
3 So text.
4 Text: *zemîn*.
5 Text: *bê hewar*.
6 Text: *hiltînî*.
7 Text: *nehîne*.
8 Text: *hiltênê*.
9 Text: *tenga*.
10 Text: *bê*.
11 Text: *bi kelimî*.
12 Text: *derkevî*.
13 Text: *me*. Correction in Silêman and Jindî 1979: 108, n. 79.
14 Text: *tinê*.
15 Text: *rî*.
16 Text: *cêye*.

(42) Awareness came among the leaders.
There was sadness and grief (?)[34] among them.
They said, "We are ashamed before them, there is not a lion left."

(43)[35] "Oh Sayyid Aḥmad, are you not convinced[36] by this?
Will you not believe firmly in the primordial one?
Why do you not entrust yourself in person to Sheykh Adi?"

(44) "If you do not believe in this,[37]
Please let us climb Mount Meshêt,[38]
There, a breeze will come from 'Mercy'.[39]"

(45) "Please let us get on our feet.
Then the man who can hold on to[40] his beard and moustache,
To him does the rank of Sheykh belong."[41]

(46) Sheykh Adi called to them,
"Kindly let us go to one of the peaks of Mount Meshêt.
Let us ponder the explanation: the Sultan is Sheykh Adi."

Commentary

1 Lit. "Syria".
2 On this figure see above, Ch. 4, Appendix.
3 Lit. "with meaning".
4 I.e., they rode a lion, and wielded a snake as a whip.
5 (?) In PX's view the name must refer to Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī.
6 The word *qat* can have several meanings, including "time", "ground, earth", and "battleground" (Hezhar 1368, s.v.).
7 I.e., they will be utterly confused and defeated. The emendation assumes that, in the original text, the word *bê* was inserted because of a confusion between *hewar* "cry for help" and *hêwir*, "shelter, refuge" (see Rizgar 1993: 98).
8 So PX. Cf. Ar. *ḍarb*, "blow".
9 So PX.
10 For the range of meanings of Kurd. *neqîb* see above, T. 9. 39, Comm. n. 34.
11 Probably Abū 'l-Wafā al-Ḥulwānī, whose name is mentioned as one of Sheykh Adi's masters (Lescot 1938: 23). Abū 'l-Wafā 's name occurs in one of the *Qaṣîdas* confidently attributed to Sheykh Adi (cf. Frank 1911: 113), and in both of the later *Qaṣîdas* (*ibid.* 121, 127), cf. above, Ch. 3.
12 On the Reshî subtribe see Lescot 1938: 111, n. 4.
13 An approximate rendering of the virtually untranslatable *bixo*.
14 This translation seems more apt here than "of solid faith" (cf. above, T. 15. 12).
15 PX: *bêwar* "suitable place for crossing a stream". According to Silêman and Jindî (1979: 106, n. 71), this particular ford is located to the east of Jebel Meqlûb.
16 I.e., Aḥmad b. al-Rifā'ī (PX).
17 Lit. "came to war".

18 Khidr may have been Aḥmad's *neqîb*or personal servant (so PX, cf. below, v. 38). The word *neqîb* is a standard epithet of Khidr (see above, Ch. 4, Appendix).
19 Lit. "the place of the men is tight".
20 The verb *venîn* can mean "settle oneself comfortably" (İzoli 1992: 432). However, when visiting the Cavern, pilgrims still rub their backs against the wall of the cave in one place. It seems likely that the legend found here is meant to explain this rite.
21 So PX, who understands *ferken* as a shortened form of *ferz ken*.
22 So PX.
23 I.e., perhaps, the original composer of the *Qewl* (PX).
24 I.e., if he does not beat the rock with his stick.
25 So PX, who pronounces the word *burk*. Rizgar 1993: 43 gives the meaning "pool".
26 I.e., the holy well at Mecca.
27 This seems to imply that the objects were transported through the air.
28 I.e., from Mecca, where Aḥmad b. al-Rifā'ī had left them, to show that the water of the Zemzem well at Lalish did indeed come directly from Mecca (PX).
29 This verse, and also the next two, probably represent the words of Meḥmed Reshan.
30 Cf. above, v. 26, Comm. n. 18.
31 (?) PX: one of the Sayyids.
32 So PX.
33 I.e., the cows ate the lions, and the chickens intended as food for the snakes which the Sayyids had wielded as whips, ate them instead (PX).
34 So PX, unconfirmed.
35 Here the speaker again appears to be Meḥmed Reshan.
36 Lit. "do you not trust in this".
37 The word *netê* is puzzling; it may be a verbal form from *hatin*.
38 Lit. "go on the mountain which is among the Meshêt". On this mountain see above, Ch. 4.
39 The allusion is clearly to the Jabal al-Raḥma ("the mountain of Mercy") in the plain of 'Arafa to the east of Mecca. The mountain is also known as "the Mountain of 'Arafa", a designation which presumably inspired the name of Mt. 'Erefat in Lalish (see Juynboll 1930: 142-3 and above, Ch. 4).
40 The verb *ḥukm kirin* here means "to govern, hold on to" (PX).
41 PX explains that the mystic who can withstand such a wind and keep his facial hair must be a true saint.

17: Qewlê Qiyametê[1]

(1) rojek ji rojan dibe[2]
terqîn li 'erşan dibe
xebare li çiyan dibe
suniye li beḥran dibe

(2) ne kesî kesan dibe
ne babî pisan dibe
ewê rojê xelkê zalim li wê derê nuqsan dibe

(3) ew bû, roja dijwar dibe
kursiya pedşa li xwar dibe
qazi bixo cebar dibe

(4) ne sed xoziya ruḥa enkar[3] dibe
sed xozme bi rûḥa ehl qiryar dibe

(5) ew bû roja 'ezîm[4] dibe
qazî bi xo kerîm dibe
xelk hemû xet-xwîn dibe

(6) ewê rojê ne sed[5] xozme bi wê ruḥa derwîn dibe

(7) ew bû, roja li wê dibe
kursiya padşa li 'erdê dibe
qazî bi xo xudê dibe

(8) sed xoziya wî mêrî kul û 'emelê wî çê dibe
her kesekî kul û 'emelê wî vê dibe

(9) hey nebî, hey nebî[6]
ḥebîbî, ya rebbî
hîmeta seyyid nebî
Me û ḥazir û guhdêra liber diwana Şêxadî û Melek[7] Şêx Sin hebe

17: The Hymn of the Resurrection

(1) There will be one day:
A ceremony for the dead will be held on high.[1]
The news will reach the mountains,
The Yezidis[2] will be (down below) in the oceans.

(2) No one will have relatives,[3]
No father will have sons.
That day the iniquitous will suffer harm in that place.

(3) In short,[4] it will be a terrible day:
The seat of the King will come down,
The judge will truly be the Almighty.

(4) A hundred times unhappy will be the disbelieving soul,
A hundred times happy the soul of steadfast people.

(5) In short, it will be a magnificent day:
The judge will truly be generous,
All people will become literate.

(6) On that day, a hundred times unhappy will be the untruthful soul.

(7) In short, that will be such a day:[5]
The seat of the King will be on earth,
The judge will truly be God.

(8) A hundred times happy that man whose troubles and efforts yield good results.[6]
Each person's troubles and efforts shall be present there.[7]

(9) Oh Prophet, oh Prophet,
My beloved, oh my Lord,
The miraculous power of the Seyyid who is a Prophet,[8]
Will be there for us, and for those present, and for the listeners, at the Assembly of Sheykh Adi and Melek Sheykh Hesen.[9]

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 91-2.
[2] Text throughout the *Qewl*: *dibî*.
[3] Text: *'enkar*.
[4] Text: *hezîm*.
[5] Text here and in v. 8: *şed*.
[6] Text: *henebî*. Correction by PX.
[7] Text: *melik*.

Commentary

[1] Lit. "at the throne(s)".
[2] PX explains the word here as meaning "judge".
[3] I.e., no one will have people to help them.
[4] Lit. "this was it".
[5] The translation assumes that the words *li wê* have a somewhat vague deictic function.
[6] Lit. "become good".
[7] So PX, who explains *vê* as an abbreviation of *vê ra*,"with him". The word could also be understood as a variant of *vêderê*, "there".
[8] I.e., presumably, Sheykh Adi, cf. above, T. 1. 44, 45 with Comm. n. 54.
[9] I.e., on the Day of Judgement we shall be with the Yezidi community and enjoy the protection of the Holy Men.

18: Qewlê Miskîno Jaro[1]

(1) hey benî Ademo
miskîno jaro Ademo

(2) ev dinya mestxaneye
wek xewna şevane
herro yara hênane[2]

(3) ka Silêmanê ḥukm dikir
ka Bilqîza nav dikir
tû jî xoş bî, ewan dinya ji xorra terk dikir

(4) ka Silêmanê pêxemberan
ka Bilqîza bi zêrrê zeran[3]
tu jî xoş bî, ew jî çûn nav ax û beran

(5) kanî Xidr, kanî Ilyas
kanî derwêşê tizbî û wekaz
tûy xoş bî, ew jî dinav axa da kirin qiyas

(6) benî Adem, li vê dinyayê mebe ṭema
ev zêrr û malê gelek meke cema
dinya bo risûlê xudê nema

(7) ev dinya erdê derwêşe
têda digerrin cimle cêşe
kesek bi nefsa kibar naçite pêşe

(8) kanî Ḥemze, kanî 'Elî
kanî ewliya, kanî enbiya
ew dinav gorrê da bûne tûtiya

(9) mala gorrê çende kûre
û çende ṭarî, tijî mare, tijî mûre
ya rebbî tu dikarî dû 'aşiqan ji yek bikî dûre

(10) werin werin xizim û lêzim
wê gavê giriya me bêt

(11) dax û sed kovan û keser
xelkê şîrîn-lêvên şeker
nema, biden xeber

18: The Hymn of the Poor Miserable One[1]

(1) Oh sons of Man,
Poor, miserable Man.

(2) This world is a drunkards' den,[2]
It is like the dreams of night,
Each day it is the lady-friend of another man.[3]

(3) Where is Solomon who (once) ruled?
Where is Bilqîs[4] who became famous?
You[5] should be content, they too have left the world.[6]

(4) Where is Solomon of the Prophets?
Where is Bilqîs with her yellow gold?
You should be content, they too have gone among soil and stones.

(5) Where is Khidr, where is Ilyas?
Where are the derwishes with their rosaries and sticks?
You should be content, they too are lying stretched out (?)[7] in the earth.

(6) Sons of Man, do not be greedy in this world,
Do not collect all this gold and all these possessions.
The world did not remain (even) for the Prophet of God.

(7) This world is the land of the (wandering) derwish,
All armies roam in it,
No one gets ahead with an arrogant mind.

(8) Where is Ḥemze, where is 'Elî?
Where are the saints, where the prophets?
They have become dust[8] inside the grave.

(9) How deep is the house of the grave,
And how dark; it is full of snakes, full of ants.
Oh Lord, you can separate two lovers from each other.

(10) Come, come, relatives and family,
Let our weeping come at this stage.

(11) Burning pain and a hundred sadnesses and sorrows!
A sweet being, with lips like sugar,
Has departed. Tell (the world)!

(12) qewî giriya me bê
ḥizn û girî bê faydeye
gorr û kifin mala meye

(13) megrî menal
hêstiran ji rûyê xo bimal
ev dinya bo pêxemberê xudê jî nema

(14) werin werin lêzim werin
emê îro gelek bigrîn

(15) xelqê mêrga[4] ḥeçiya[5] dike ew mîr dike
xêr û şerran ġefîr dike
daxa dilan bapîr dike

Textual Notes

[1] From Silêman and Jindî 1979: 93-5.
[2] Text: *henan.*
[3] Text: *zêrrî zerran.*
[4] Text: *mîrga.*
[5] Text: *ḥeciya.* Correction by PX.

(12) Let our weeping come,.strong.
(But) sorrow and weeping are useless,
The grave and the shroud are our natural home.

(13) Do not weep, do not wail!
Wipe the tears from your face.
This world did not remain (even) for the Prophet of God.

(14) Come, come, family, come,
Today we shall weep copiously.

(15) Whatever the people of the Sanctuary do, that Prince[9] does:
He forgives good and wicked deeds,
He heals[10] the burning sorrow of the heart!

Commentary

[1] The *Qewl* is recited in the house of the dead, and is intended to comfort the bereaved (PX). Roughly the same text is found in Bedir Khan 1933, under the title *Nivêja Miriyan*, "Prayer for the Dead".
[2] I.e., somewhere where there is no place for reason and order, and where visitors stay only a short time.
[3] Lit. "of others".
[4] I.e., the Queen of Sheba.
[5] Lit. "you, too".
[6] Lit. "for themselves".
[7] So PX (unconfirmed).
[8] PX: *tûtiya* "bone, soil", but cf. Pers. *tūtiyā*, "tutty, polishing powder".
[9] I.e., God (PX). The meaning of the line may be that God can be expected to be as lenient and comforting as the 'men of religion'.
[10] So PX. Lit. "handles (sorrow) like a grandfather"?

19: Qewlê Seremergê[1]

(1) rojekê ji rojane
xelkê 'êrfî zane
hilûn ji mirinê biden beyane

(2) xelkê 'êrfî zane werin
li van beyana bifikirin
sitrekê ji mirinê bi xo bigrin

(3) ew surra min dikuje[2]
dest û ser û pê û qalib nijî
miskîno bin Ademo hilû bijî

(4) ji bana nizil bû ew surre
nişîbek 'efrandibû bi min re
emî di-razîne heke hendeke û heke pirre

(5) beḥra ḥeq weṭinî
neh meha tê sekinî
ji qudretê mekinî

(6) ji qudretê kiribû temame
çî beḥreke bi-ġemame
bin[3] êqsîrê te ez bûm ġulame

(7) fikrîm li wê fikarê
li mersûmê li firwarê
min zor ferîqe[4] kiribûn ji wê beḥrê

(8) min zor farîqe kiribûn ji makê
û ezna didam[5] şibakê
bi rû da çome zikakê
ez daname ber bedenê makê

(9) li min cema dibûn xizim û lêzim û cînara
babî minêkare ji mêrê mîra
bi şa(yî)ya dîwanêd feqîra

(10) bi şa(yî)ya day û baba
qewal wê distrên def û şibaba
îlehiyo te em xinê kirîn *û[6] ava

19: The Hymn of the Moment of Death

(1) One of these days...
Knowing people, who are aware,
Let them arise and give an account of death.

(2) Let knowing, aware people come!
Let them think about these explanations,
Let them uncover the secrets of death.

(3) This Mystery which is killing me (now),
(Once) created my hands, head, feet and body.
(Saying,) "Oh, poor son of man, arise and live!"

(4) This Mystery came down from above
It had created a fate for me.[1]
We are content whether it is little or much.

(5) It made its home in the ocean of Truth;
For nine months it stayed there.
This was possible[2] because of the Power.

(6) Through the Power it became complete.
What an opaque[3] ocean it is!
Under (the influence of) your elixir (?)[4] I became a young man.

(7) I was pondering on those thoughts,[5]
On the Mandate (from heaven), on the Command.
I was removed far from that ocean.[6]

(8) I was removed far from my mother,
And invited (to go) to the opening.[7]
Head first[8] I went into the narrow passage.[9]
I was laid on my mother's body.

(9) Family, relatives and neighbours[10] gathered around me,
My father was grateful to the holy men of the Prince,[11]
To the joy of the assemblies of Feqîrs.

(10) To the joy of mother and father,
The Qewwals are playing the *def* and *shibab*.
Oh God, you have made us happy and prosperous.[12]

(11) îlehiyo te em xinê kirîn
ji berî roja em bimrîn
te bi weledekî nêr em şahî kirîn

(12) çî weledekî miskîne
danabû linav tabûteke darîne
bi şevê û rojê hijîne û girîne.

(13) îlehiyo pirr kereme
şifqeta te hebit li bin Ademe
te em rakirîne ser qedema

(14) li ser qedema digerriyam
rûḥ hate dest û pêyam
îlehiyo bi te firriyam

(15) li ser qedema di-bezim
li surra mîrê xo bilezim
pisporê babê xo ezim

(16) çî lawekî sermeste
bi surra mîrê xo vediweste
bab maliyek jêra dixweste

(17) çî maleka bi ray û tekbîr
lê di-îyûrîn coqetêd feqîr
vêra hebû nîşana mîr

(18) vêra hebû nîşana mîr îşallah
be'dî wan ḥewlan
îlehiyo te em kirîne malxoyêd mala

(19) îlehiyo nema bisebrîn
te bi zêr û mal kirîn
bese bixoyn bideyn heta roja em bimrîn.

(20) meke em derwêş
riya heq bikeyn teftêş
liber nav û dikrêd[7] te bibîn hawîş

(21) talan kirin bi carek
ne rasmal ma ne dîndarek
ne li me di pirsit ne birayek ne yarek

(11) Oh God, you have blessed us:
Before the day of our death,
You have made us happy with a male child.

(12) What a poor little baby it is!
It has been laid in a wooden coffin,[13]
Night and day there is rocking[14] and wailing.

(13) Oh God, full of generosity,
May your compassion be with (this) son of man.
You have raised us to our feet.

(14) I was walking on my feet,
A soul came to my body,[15]
Oh God, I flew to you.

(15) I am running on my feet,
Hastening to (know) the Mystery of my Prince:
I am my father's big boy.[16]

(16) What a crazy lad he is:[17]
He is shy[18] before the Mystery of his Prince.
His father seeks[19] a wife for him.

(17) What a wise and pious wife:
The (blood-)lines of pious ones[20] are manifest in her.
She had with her the Sign of the Prince.

(18) She had with her the Sign of the Prince, God willing!
After those efforts,
Oh God, you made us householders.

(19) Oh God, we need no longer be patient:[21]
You have given us gold and possessions,
It is enough for us to receive[22] and to give until the day we die.

(20) So let us,[23] poor ones,
Investigate the ways of Truth,[24]
And become confused before your name and remembrance.

(21) Suddenly (he) has raided (us)!
Neither possessions[25] nor pious people are left,
Neither brother nor friend enquires about us.

(22) teyrê dewletê firrî
te li me hesa kir çirê bi girrî[8]
suxûmeta te yar û birêd axiretê nasîn ji me birrî.

(23) suxûmeta te yar û birêd axiretê ji me birrî nasî
sotîn libin vî kirasî
hind bi zebûnî hind bi pêxwasî

(24) bendekî teme yî zebûn
te ez dam ji 'erdekî nebûn
xêr û şerr libin destê te bûn

(25) bi te didem xêr û şerra
hîmeta te hebit min ra
de'wedarim bi navê te ra

(26) navê tey dikirîn
şaf û heybetêd te fikirîn
we'de hatiye rojekê em dê mirîn

(27) rojekî ez nehiş bûm
bendeyê melikê 'erş bûm
ketime nav nivînê û nexoş bûm

(28) nexoş bûm ketime nav nivîne
hatine ser min lêzmêt xûnê
bi zêrr û mal na ême kirîne

(29) neye bi zêrre ne bi male
babî[9] pîremêrî kale
gotê: 'ezîzê min, ji heft weleda ev welede min wê heye li bale

(30) ne bi zêrre ne bi malê dinê
babî pîremêrey kaley finê
gotê: 'ezîzê min, ji heft weleda ev welede min wê heye bi tinê

(31) bab dibêjit ez çî bikem çî çar kem
deh peza bi qurban kem
serê xo bi şikran kem
banga mine nebî simayil ku bankem

(22) The bird of fortune has flown
Why have you turned your feelings against us in anger?
Because of you (?),[26] friends and brothers of the hereafter have cut off their acquaintance with us.

(23) Because of you friends and brothers of the hereafter have cut off their acquaintance with us.
We burned in this incarnation,[27]
Partly because of being lowly and partly because of being barefoot.

(24) I am your lowly slave:
You created me from the dust of non-being.
Good and bad were in your control.

(25) To you I attribute good and bad,
May your miraculous power be there for me.
I make my claim in your name.

(26) Your name is what we remember,[28]
We think about your qualities and majesty.
There is a Covenant[29] that one day we shall die.

(27) One day I became unconscious,
I was the servant of the King of the Throne,
I fell into bed and was taken ill.

(28) I was taken ill and fell into bed,
My blood relatives came to me,
They could not buy me (back)[30] with gold and possessions.

(29) Neither with gold nor with possessions.
(My) father, the old man,
Said, "My dear, of my seven children (only) this son is always near me."

(30) Neither with gold nor with the possessions of the world.
My father, the old man, about to die,[31]
Said,"My dear, of my seven children I only have this son."[32]

(31) My father said, "What shall I do to put things right?[33]
I shall sacrifice ten sheep,[34]
I shall pledge my own life as a thank-offering.
My appeal is to the Prophet Isma'îl, whom I invoke."

(32) banga min nebî simayil
babî pîremêrî kaley sefîle
go: tirsa min ṣaf û heybetêd 'Izrayîle

(33) 'Izrayîl melkê mewtê
li hemû dera li hemû 'erda ew tê
go: ez hatîme zor bibirim ji hewtê

(34) 'Izrayîl melkê mêra
yî delq û tancêd feqîra
go: îlehiyo te em razandîn wekî êqsîra

(35) 'Izrayîl perrî bi-kirrim[10]
hawirrî şara difirrim
ez nehatîme nobê li kesî bigrim
ez hatîme bab û pisa jêk bibirrim

(36) 'Izrayîl perrî bi-keskim
hawirrî şara diçiriskim
ez ne hatîme nobê li kes kim
ez hatîme vî qalibî ji nefs kim

(37) ya me ji wê[11] bû
rûḥ ji dest û pêya nijê bû
ya me ji wê bû

(38) surrê ligel rûḥê beḥs kir
xo nerm ji dest û pêya xilas kir
ewê der sa'et[12] xudanê xo li wêder nas kir

(39) li min digrîn jin û mêre
ḥiznek biken şêran şêre
eve bû kasa 'enzel jêre

(40) ez tazî kirim û hiştim
ser pûşekî danam û şuştim
ez bi ava germ biriştim

(41) kivinê min dipîve[13]
qerqere dû *bust[14] û nîve
miskîno bin Ademo hilû bipîve[15]

(32) "My appeal (is directed to) the Prophet Isma'îl."
My father, the simple old man,
Said, "I fear the qualities and majesty of 'Izra'îl."

(33) 'Izra'il is the angel of death.
He comes to all places, to all lands,
He says, "I have come to vanquish the Seven."[35]

(34) Izra'îl is the angel of the holy men,
(Who wears) the habit and headdress of Feqîrs.
(Someone) said, "Oh God, you have put us to sleep like a draught (?)".[36]

(35) "I am 'Izra'îl, the hostile supernatural being,
Around the towns I fly.
I have not come to watch over anyone,
I have come to separate fathers and sons from each other."

(36) "I am 'Izra'îl, the supernatural being with the club,[37]
Around the towns I (suddenly) become manifest like a spark (of fire).
I have not come to watch over anyone,
I have come to deprive this body of breath."

(37) Our (story) was about this:
The soul has become a stranger[38] to the hands and feet.
Our (story) was about this.

(38) The Mystery argued with the soul,
It released itself gently from hands and feet,
It immediately recognised its Lord there.

(39) Women and men are weeping for me.
Let them grieve tremendously!
(Saying), "Thus the cup of everlasting life was (presented) to him."

(40) They left me, naked.[39]
They laid me on a layer of straw and washed me,
They scalded[40] me with hot water.

(41) They are[41] measuring my shroud.
The eye-cover[42] is two and a half span
Oh poor son of man, come on, measure!

(42) kivinê min hijde gaze
danabû ser cinaze
wê li min digrîn wêlî û biraze

(43) kerem ken dû dara bînin
werisekî[16] tê werînin
cinazê min ser deynin

(44) ew bû dara leylûn ṣedre
hilgirti bû yar û bira
min ji mala mezin xwesti bû xatire

(45) kirime der ji mala mezin
kiçik û mezin li pê min dibezin
zênara li xilmeta ġerîba çî bi-lezin.

(46) birime aliyê goristanî
li ser axa tirbê danî
hind wê digirîn bo vî ciwanî
axir ji rûwê dinê dibû fanî

(47) dema di kolin tirbe
ji şerq heta bi ġerbe
kes nema venexwari bû ji ew şerbe

(48) tirba min temam kir
serê min di nav kir
min li mala qedîm silav kir

(49) silavêd min li mala qedîm
birime nav xelkekî zorî zavî hezîm
min go: îlehiyo tuy melikê kerîm

(50) îlehiyo melik el-'erşe
ser singê min radixên ferşe
her ferşek wekî xerşe

(51) heriyê datînin[17] li derze
axê di-înine ser min bi leze
dû kêla danên; go: eve ferze

(52) kerem ken û deng hilînin
terqînê û yasîna li ser min bixwînin
navê Xudê û Ṭawûsî Melek li ser min bînin

(42) My shroud is eighteen *gaz,*
They had laid it on the corpse.
Friends (?)[43] and nephews are weeping for me.

(43) Please bring two poles,
Fasten them with a rope,
And place my corpse on them.

(44) Those were the poles of ...[44]
Friends and brothers lifted it up,
I said farewell to the big house.[45]

(45) I was taken away from the big house.
Young and old rush after me.
It is amazing how they hurry to serve strangers.

(46) They took me in the direction of the cemetery,
They laid me down in the earth of the tomb,
Some were crying for this youth,
Who had now[46] disappeared from the face of the earth.

(47) When they are digging the grave,
From east to west,
There is no one who has not drunk from[47] this wine.

(48) They completed my tomb,
They put my head into it.
I said goodbye to my old dwelling-place.

(49) My salutations to the old dwelling-place!
I was brought amid a great multitude of people,[48]
I said, "Oh God, you are the generous King."

(50) Oh God, King of the Throne,
They are putting rocks on my chest.
Each rock is like ....[49]

(51) They sealed (the tomb) up with mud,[50]
They hastily put soil over me,
They put up two tombstones, saying, "this is obligatory".

(52) Please, raise your voices,
Pray funerary prayers and *Yāsīns*[51] over me,
Pronounce the names of God and Melek Tawus over me.

(53) ew bû kêla serê ṣedrî
wê li xelkê nazikî leṭîfî hedirî[18]
cayize li ġerîba bigrî qedrî

(54) kirime xaniyê bê derî
dû hatine ser min wê dixûnin wekî teterî
min îna heft dolabêd aşa li serî

(55) dû hatine ser min wê dikene qîr û qale
êkî kerre êkî lale
wê ji min dipirsin ḥal û ḥewale

(56) tirsa mine ji yê kerre
dimbûsê wî heftî perre
rojê sê cara tête bi diyarî min re

(57) tirsa min ji yê lale
heftî batman dimbûs heye li bale
ewê li ser rûḥa min bûye ḥewale

(58) ko li min dihilînit dimbûsî
wê jê diçin birq û birûsî
ji tirsa da dil û hinavêd min pêkeve dinûsî

(59) gava min diweste
heftî batman dimbûs asin heye li deste
ji tirsa da zimanê min şikeste

(60) dû hatine ser min ji min dipirsî
çeqmaqê wan weke kursî
miskîno bin Ademo, tu çî insî tu çî cinsî?

(61) bin Ademo, hûn li kûne
herro siba radibin şerrêd we di-nûne
me çû xêrêd we nedîne

(62) bin Ademo, em bi xo xêrîn
em razdarêd[19] cebêrîn
em xudanêd xêra na-azêrîn

(53) Thus the stone was put over my chest,[52]
Oh delicate, pleasant people who are present,
It is permissible to weep a little over strangers.

(54) I was put into a dwelling without doors.
Two (beings) came to me, shouting like Tartars,
Seven hoppers for (grinding) stones[53] were put over me.

(55) Two (beings) came to me, making much noise:
One is deaf, the other is dumb,
They are asking about my life and times.[54]

(56) I am afraid of the deaf one:
His mace has seventy spikes,
Three times a day he comes to see me.

(57) I am afraid of the dumb one:
He has a mace of seventy *batman*[55] with[56] him.
He is the one who has become the inquisitor about my soul.

(58) When he raises his mace at me,
Lightning and flashes come from it.
My internal organs are all tied up in knots from fear.

(59) When he stands near me (?),[57]
With the iron mace of seventy *batman* in his hand,
My tongue fails to function[58] from fear.

(60) Two (beings) came to me and asked me questions.
Their firing equipment[59] was (as large) as a throne.
"Oh, poor son of man, what sort of human are you, what kind are you?"

(61) "Oh son of Man, where are you?
You get up every morning and you produce new evils.
We have seen no good at all from you."

(62) "Oh son of Man, in essence we are good.
We are the trusted servants of the All-powerful.
We do not torment[60] men of good deeds."

(63) dû hatine ser min çav di-mezin weke tas
tilî di-wane[20] weke misas
nênûk di-wane weke das
min go: sed xozma wê rûḥê ye bê guneheye bê sûç bê binas

(64) dû hatine ser min çav di-mezin weke stêr
tilî di-wane weke bêr
nênûk di-wane weke kêr
min go: ṣed xozma rûḥa ehl il-xêr ne ṣed xozma rûḥa 'inkêr[21]

(65) dû hatine ser min seḥte 'l-sixûn
di-bilindin seḥtek mezin
ji tirsa dil û hinavêd min têk dilerzin

(66) dû hatine ser min di-reşin wekî feqîr
bisk di-nermin wekî ḥerîr
vêra hebû nîşana mîr

(67) gava dihatin û diqedimîn
çêrekê dikelimîn
bi 'ilmekî di'ilmîn

(68) ew bû 'ilmê qatê
zebêniya ez birime ser pê pira ṣiratê
ew bû ciyê xudê lê diket şifatê

(69) ew şifate ye we ye
pira ṣiratê, aliyek behişte, êk tariye êk dojeye
haweke yar û birêd axiretê ser gune(h)karêd bira heye

(70) ew şifata bi-nîşane
pira ṣiratê, aliyek behişte êk tariye êk dojeye
haweke yar û birêd axiretê ser gune(h)karêd birane
em di-kêmîn Xudêy temame

Textual Notes

1 From Silêman 1985: 113-21.
2 Text: *dikuj*. Correction by PX.
3 Text: *ben*.
4 Text: *farîqe*.
5 Text: *didem*.
6 Text: *dû*.
7 Text: *dikarêd*. Correction by PX.

(63) Two (beings) came to me, their eyes big like bowls.
Their fingers are like oxgoads,
Their fingernails are like scythes.
I said, "A hundred times happy that soul which is without sins, without faults, without errors."

(64) Two (beings) came to me, their eyes big like stars.
Their fingers are like spades,
Their fingernails are like knives.
I said, "A hundred times happy are those who are good; a hundred times unhappy the soul who denies (God)."

(65) Two (beings) have come to me right now,[61]
They are tall, (it is) a great hour (?)[62]
My internal organs are all atremble with fear.

(66) Two (beings) have come to me, they are black like Feqîrs.
Their sideburns are as soft as silk.
In this there was the Sign of the Prince.

(67) When they came and proceeded,
They pronounced a discourse.
They were very knowledgeable.

(68) That was decisive knowledge!
The harsh ones[63] took me to the foot of the Ṣirat Bridge,[64]
That was the place where God intercedes.[65]

(69) That intercession is like this:
On one side of the Ṣirat Bridge is Paradise, on (the other) one there is darkness, on (a third) one there is Hell,
There is help[66] from friends and 'Brother(s) of the Hereafter' for their brothers, the sinners.

(70) That intercession contains a Sign:[67]
On one side of the Ṣirat Bridge is Paradise, on (the other) one there is darkness, on (a third) one there is Hell.
There is help from friends and 'Brothers of the Hereafter' for their brothers, the sinners.
We are deficient, God is perfect.

8 Text: *bigorî*.
9 So text.
10 Text: *kurrim*.
11 Text: *wî*.
12 Text: *şat*.
13 Text: *pêve*.
14 Text: *gez*. Correction by PX.
15 Text: *pêve*.
16 Text: *werî sekî*.
17 Text: *datinên*.
18 Text: *herdî*. Correction by PX.
19 Text: *razadarêd*.
20 Here and in the following passages the text has *di wene*. Correction by PX.
21 So text.

Commentary

1 Lit. "with me".
2 So PX.
3 So PX. Cf. Ar. *ġamām* "white cloud", *ġumām*, "rheum, defluxion, cold".
4 PX states that both the words *ben* and *êqsîr* mean "prisoner". No confirmation could be found, however, nor would this interpretation seem to yield good sense.
5 PX explains *fikar* as a Kurdish form of Ar. *afkār*, "thoughts". The ending suggests, however, that the word was felt to be a sg.
6 So PX. In Standard Kurmanji the words would mean "I removed them". It seems likely that in an earlier version of the text, a narrative present (*min zor ferîqe diken)* was used.
7 Lit. "window".
8 So, approximately, PX.
9 Lit. "alley".
10 PX explains the form *cînar* as a variant of *cîran*, "neighbour".
11 I.e., of God. The unexpected pl. obl. ending is due to the rhyme.
12 For the word *xinê*, "happy", see Rizgar 1993: 198 s.v. *xenê*.
13 I.e., the cradle.
14 Viz of the cradle.
15 Lit. "to my hands and feet". This appears to be one of the rare instances of the use of a pronominal enclitic in Kurmanji.
16 PX: *pispor* can have two meanings, (1) "expert", (2) "a boy from the age of eight to about thirteen (who is capable of doing most things without difficulty)".
17 I.e., he is now an adolescent (PX).
18 So PX. The basic meaning of the verb is "he stopped, stood still".
19 Lit. "sought".
20 Lit. "groups of Feqîrs". PX states that the word *feqîr* here simply means "pious".
21 The words could also mean, "nothing is left, let us be patient".
22 Lit. "eat".
23 PX explains *meke* as a negative imp. of *kirin* ("do not let us investigate"). It seems more pausible, however, to regard the form as a variant of *meger*; cf. *heke* for *heger*.
24 Or "God".
25 So PX, unconfirmed.
26 So PX, unconfirmed.
27 Lit. "under this shirt". The expression *kiras gihorrîn* means "to die, change one's outward form".
28 PX explains the form *dikirîn* as deriving from Ar. *dhikr*, "remembrance".
29 Lit. "a promise has come". In the Kurdish version of the MR, the word *wade* is used where the Ar. version has *mīthāq*, "Covenant", see Kreyenbroek 1992: 73, n. 58.
30 Lit. "did not buy us".
31 So PX for *finê* (from Ar. *fanā*).
32 The others having died, or gone away (PX).
33 Lit. "what shall I do and what remedy shall I make".
34 Lit. "smaller domestic animals, sheep and/or goats".
35 I.e., the Seven Mysteries, or the "seven sons" mentioned in vv. 29, 30. The translation assumes that the form *bibirim* is to be derived from *birin* (for a similar form see above, T. 12. 5, with n. 3). For the expression *zor birin ji kesî*, "to vanquish s.o.", see Rizgar 1993: 210.
36 The translation assumes that the word *êqsîr* represents Pers. *eksīr*, "elixir", cf. also above, v. 6.

[37] For this translation of the form *bi-keskim* cf. Turk. *keskî*, "hatchet".
[38] Cf. Standard Kurm. *nijê*, "stranger" (Rizgar 1993: 133).
[39] Lit. "made me naked and left me".
[40] So PX, unconfirmed.
[41] The translation assumes that the form *pîve* is a variant of *pîvin*.
[42] I.e., the material for covering the eyes of the dead person (PX). İzoli (1992: 339) gives a meaning "skeleton".
[43] So PX. The form *wêlî* may be a variant of *welî*, "guardian, friend".
[44] *Non liquet.*
[45] I.e., perhaps, the large house of the living, as opposed to the narrow grave.
[46] Lit. "finally".
[47] The words *ew şerbe* suggest that the words were originally the logical object of the sentence, without preposition, The word *ji* may also be a mistake for *jî*.
[48] So PX, who explains *zav* as meaning "many". The form *hezîm* is a variant of Ar.*'aẓīm*.
[49] PX: *xerş* "a big and heavy thing".
[50] Lit. "they put mud over the cracks".
[51] I.e., a *Sura* of the *Qur'ān*.
[52] Lit. "this was the stone on the chest".
[53] I.e., presumably, large boulders. Cf. above, Ch. 6 under "Funerary Customs", and Empson 1928: 63.
[54] The translation follows the tenses of the Kurdish text.
[55] A *batman* is approximately 8 kilograms (İzoli 1992: 44).
[56] On *bal* as a variant of *ba* see Rizgar 1993: 27.
[57] A guess. The line appears to be corrupt.
[58] Lit. "is broken".
[59] The word *çeqmaq* can denote a range of implements producing fire (İzoli 1992: 86; cf. Steingass 1892: 396).
[60] The form *azêrîn* seems to derive from a verb **azardin*, whereas Standard Kurmanji normally uses *azar dan*. Alternatively, the form might derive from *azirîn*, "to get angry" (Rizgar 1993: 26).
[61] Lit. "exactly on time" (PX, unconfirmed). The form *seḥt* may be a variant of *sa'et*.
[62] PX does not understand the line.
[63] So PX for *zebênî*, unconfirmed.
[64] The words obviously refer here to the Bridge between earth and the hereafter, not to the small bridge in the Valley of Lalish which pilgrims used to cross three times before proceeding to the Sanctuary, cf. above, Ch. 4.
[65] Sic. A typical instance of rhyme taking precedence over logic.
[66] So PX, who cites the expression *hawa filanî qewl bibêje*, "recite a *Qewl* on behalf of X".
[67] Or "proof", i.e., of the existence of God.

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